

# Information seeking behaviour of professionals: a qualitative study.

*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, University of Twente, Enschede, Communication Studies*



## **Author**

Arie Zoontjes (s0114308)  
a.h.g.zoontjes@student.utwente.nl

**Supervisor:** Dr. T.M. van der Geest

**Second supervisor:** Dr. J. Karreman

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## Preface

After many months of hard work I am proud to finally be able to present the study that is now before you. During the execution of this study I have ran against some walls, but in the end I was always able to climb over them. Of course, I learned a lot about the information seeking process of professionals and about doing research in general, but also about life outside the boundaries of my comfort zone.

This research would not have been possible without some people that played an important role in the successful completion of this study. First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisor Thea van der Geest for her support and valuable feedback throughout this study.

I would also like to thank the Children's Rights Knowledge Centre (Kenniscentrum Kinderrechten), Sara Lembrechts and Kathy Vlieghe in particular, for giving me the opportunity to conduct the study at KeKi. Furthermore I would like to thank all of my interviewees for their time to help me. Also I would like to say thank you to the students from my graduation circle for their continuous feedback.

Finally I would like to say thank you to my parents for their support and their patience and to Rebecca for her support, patience and her proof reading.

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the information seeking behaviour of professionals. The purpose is to identify how the information provision to professionals can be improved by charting the information seeking behaviour of professionals. It looks at the information needs and motivators for the choice for sources and channels of (children's rights) professionals.

A literature study was conducted to get a global view of the information seeking behaviour of professionals. This literature study was followed by a (qualitative) case study whereby a total number of 29 semi-structured interviews with children's rights professionals and other professionals were used to describe the information seeking behaviour of (children's rights) professionals.

Based on the results of the interviews it can be concluded that in general, the information seeking process of (children's rights) professionals starts with the subjective task that leads to an information need. This information need is also influenced by situational factors. The information need then leads to a choice of action: the choice for a certain channel/source. The interviewees mentioned a lot of different motivations for choice of action: subjective task, situational factors, personal factors, organizational factors, personal style of seeking, source characteristics and channel characteristics. Time, space, preference, accessibility and ease of use were identified as the biggest motivators for choice of action for professionals. Eventually, a general model of information seeking behaviour of professionals is developed, containing the different elements of the information seeking process and the motivations for information seeking behaviour.

When looking at the statements from the children's rights professionals it becomes clear that they prefer channels with clear language use and structure and easy to use search functions. Furthermore, they have a preference for personal contact and

often consult their professional network to find information. Therefore it is recommended to KeKi to improve the information provisioning to (children's rights) professionals by improving the ease of use of the online (academic) KeKi database, offer information in concise formats and create a network of (children's rights) professionals. According to the interviewees the ease of use of the online database can be improved by allowing to sort search results by date. The presentation of the results can be improved by displaying the search results on top of the page. With regard to the information provisioning to professionals in general, it is proposed to support them in using channels they don't use regularly to become familiar with them and to learn how to use them more quickly and efficient.

It is suggested to test the developed model in this study through empirical research to demonstrate its value, and to provide further endorsement of the value of the models it is based on.

## Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek richt zich op het informatiezoekgedrag van professionals. Het doel is om te identificeren hoe de informatievoorziening aan professionals kan worden verbeterd door het informatiezoekgedrag van professionals in kaart te brengen. Het kijkt naar de informatiebehoeften en de motivaties voor het gebruik van bronnen en kanalen van (kinderrechten) professionals.

Er is een literatuurstudie gedaan om een algemeen beeld te verkrijgen van het informatiezoekgedrag van professionals. Deze literatuurstudie werd gevolgd door een (kwalitatieve) casestudy waarbij er 29 semigestructureerde interviews zijn gehouden met kinderrechten professionals en andere professionals om het informatiezoekgedrag van (kinderrechten) professionals te beschrijven.

Op basis van de resultaten kan geconcludeerd worden dat over het algemeen het informatiezoekproces van (kinderrechten) professionals begint met de subjectieve taak die leidt tot een informatiebehoefte. Deze informatiebehoefte wordt ook beïnvloedt door situationele factoren. Deze behoefte leidt vervolgens naar een actie: de keuze voor een bepaalde bron of kanaal. De geïnterviewden hebben veel verschillende motivaties voor de bron/kanaalkeuze genoemd: subjectieve taak, situationele factoren, persoonlijke factoren, organisatie factoren, bronkenmerken en kanaalmerken. Tijd, plaats, voorkeur, toegang en gebruiksgemak zijn geïdentificeerd als de meest voorkomende motivaties voor bron- en kanaalkeuze door professionals. Uiteindelijk is er een model opgesteld van het informatiezoekgedrag van professionals dat de verschillende elementen van het informatiezoekproces en de motivaties voor informatiezoekgedrag bevat.

Wanneer er gekeken wordt naar uitspraken van de kinderrechten professionals wordt het duidelijk dat zij een voorkeur hebben voor kanalen met duidelijk taalgebruik en structuur en gemakkelijk te gebruiken zoekfuncties. Verder hebben ze een voorkeur voor persoonlijk contact en raadplegen ze vaak hun professionele

netwerk bij het zoeken naar informatie. Daarom wordt KeKi aangeraden om de informatievoorziening aan kinderrechten professionals te verbeteren door het gebruiksgemak van de KeKi databank te verhogen, informatie beknopt en duidelijk aan te bieden en om een kinderrechten professionals netwerk te creëren/in stand te houden. Volgens de geïnterviewden kan het gebruiksgemak van de databank worden vergroot door toe te staan om resultaten te rangschikken op datum. De presentatie van de resultaten kan worden verbeterd door de zoekresultaten bovenaan de pagina weer te geven. Met betrekking tot de informatievoorziening aan professionals in het algemeen wordt voorgesteld om ze te ondersteunen in het gebruik van kanalen die ze niet regelmatig gebruiken om er bekend mee te raken, zodat professionals leren hoe deze kanalen sneller en effectiever te gebruiken.

Het is aanbevolen om het in deze studie opgestelde model te testen met behulp van verder empirisch onderzoek om zijn waarde te bewijzen, en om verdere bekrachtiging van de modellen waarop het model is gebaseerd.

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<b>5.1 Discussion</b>	<b>87</b>
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## 1. Introduction

As new technologies and information delivery systems emerge, the way in which individuals search for information to support research, work tasks and creative activities is changing (Niu et al., 2010). Formerly, users were obliged to conform to library practices and standards in order to successfully meet their information needs. Now, user's time and attention are scarce, while information resources and channels are abundant with the development of the Internet, Web-based services and easily accessed digital content (Connaway, Dickey & Radford, 2011). Therefore, information providers are finding that they must compete with other, sometimes more convenient, familiar, and/or easy to use information sources. Connaway, Dickey & Radford (2011) state that while the user once built workflows around library systems and services, now, increasingly, an information provider must build its services around user workflows. This means that in order to be a successful information provider, it is necessary to understand the information seeking behaviour of target groups.

The present study aims to describe the information seeking behaviour of professionals and the factors that influence their information seeking behaviour. In this study the focus will be on children's rights professionals as cases, because it is expected that these professionals have a need for different types of information since the group of children's rights professionals can be divided in researchers, policy makers and practice workers. These children's rights professionals will be contrasted and compared with an equal size group of other professionals to draw conclusions about the information seeking behaviour of professionals in general.

### 1.1 Research goals and research questions

The overall aim of this study is to chart the information seeking behaviour of professionals to identify how the information provision to professionals can be improved. It will examine the information seeking process of professionals from

various fields of work. In order to do this, this study consists of two parts: 1) an in-depth literature study and 2) a case study using semi-structured interviews. In order to reach the main goal of this study it has several objectives:

1. To explore the literature on information seeking behaviour and explore what are the underlying factors of specific information seeking behaviour.
2. To chart the information seeking behaviour of professionals and to chart the underlying factors for displaying specific information seeking behaviour.
3. To explore differences between professionals from different fields of work.
4. To explore ideas as how to improve the information provision to professionals in general, and to give recommendations to KeKi, with particular attention to information provision with their online database.

In order to reach the first objective of this study, a literature study will be conducted. To serve the second objective of this study the following research questions will be answered:

Research question 1: *Which elements can be distinguished in the information seeking process of professionals?*

Research question 2: *What are professionals' motives for their choice of action, in particular their choice for specific channels and sources?*

The fact that different professionals from different fields of work will be studied will help to answer research question 3, which will be answered to serve research objective 3:

Research question 3: *Are there differences in the information seeking behaviours of professionals from different fields of work/target groups?*

The results will help explore ideas as how to improve the information provisioning to professionals and give recommendations to KeKi, with particular attention to information provisioning with their online database.

## **1.2 Research approach**

The first part of this study (chapter 2) will serve the first objective. It contains a literature study about the factors that influence information seeking behaviour. The factors identified in the literature study are used to prepare the interview questions for the case study. Thus the literature study forms the basis for the case study.

The second part of this study is a case study. Descriptive research, like case studies, can be used to describe processes and to distinguish underlying factors of certain behaviour (Saunders et al, 2011; Babbie, 2007). This means that the present study will be descriptive, because it is focused on how the information seeking process looks like and on what the underlying factors of information behaviour are. Yin (2003) indicates that case studies are best suited to a research when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has no or little control. Because this study focuses on *how* the information seeking process looks like in a contemporary setting and there is no control over the behavioural events, a case study is the best fitting research strategy for this study according to Yin (2003).

The 'case' in this study is the information seeking behaviour of a certain professional when (s) he's working on a project. Because the information seeking behaviour of professionals is investigated, the individual professionals are the units of analysis. Because there is more than one unit of analysis, this study is a multiple case study (Yin, 2003). The processes of one specific group, children's rights professionals, will be compared and contrasted with the processes of an equal size group of other professionals. This will also make the results more generalizable.

### **1.3 Academic relevance**

This study contributes to existing research about information seeking behaviour of people in a specific context. For example Jamali and Nicholas (2010, p. 240) stated, 'several authors have pointed out that there is a need for narrowing the research focus, for in- depth studies of well defined groups'. By focusing on the specific context of children's rights professionals and other professionals this study aims to meet this need. In this study it will be examined whether existing models of information seeking behaviour are applicable to the specific context of children's rights professionals. Also, this study aims to discover motives for information seeking behaviour that have not yet been demonstrated by earlier research. This way, this study will strengthen and expand on existing models of information seeking behaviour. Finally, this study will show to what extent there are differences between (the specific context of) children's rights professionals and other professionals. Leckie & Pettigrew (1996) already developed a model applicable to 'all' professionals, but their article is based on a comparison of different studies. The researcher was unable to find a similar study to the present one in which professionals from different fields of work were actually compared within the study to develop a general model of information seeking behaviour. This research aims to fill that gap.

### **1.4 Practical relevance**

The results of this study can be used to indicate how the information needs of professionals can best be met, because this study identifies the information needs and its underlying factors of professionals and what factors influence their choice for certain information channels and sources. As an underlying goal, understanding the reality of children's rights professionals work-related information behaviour may guide a knowledge centre on children's rights in the provision of more appropriate systems and services. Finally, the developed framework can serve as a means to quickly describe the information needs and factors that influence the information needs of professionals.

### 1.5 Description of the case study context

The promoter of this study is the Children's Rights Knowledge Centre (located in Ghent, Flanders), in Dutch abbreviated as KeKi (Kenniscentrum Kinderrechten). KeKi is a knowledge centre for children's rights. Its mission is to bring together academic knowledge about children's rights, make it accessible, spread it and stimulate it. The knowledge centre was formed on January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. To carry out its mission, KeKi has four strategic goals (KeKi's annual report, 2014):

- To build knowledge and expertise on children's rights on the basis of academic research.
- To communicate academic findings and make academic findings on children's rights available.
- To advise and support the Flemish youth and children's rights policy based on academic research.
- To monitor the quality of the daily management in the organization.

Children's rights are the youth equivalent of human rights, and are meant to safeguard the welfare of children. They are not only formal laws like the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but also include fundamental principles of social equality and human dignity that are used or claimed in social practices but which are not themselves formalised in a human rights act (Op de Beeck, Put & Lembrechts, 2013).

The instruments KeKi uses to carry out their mission and to reach their goals are amongst others meeting days like Research on Stage or training programmes, its website and its online database. At the meeting days, information about developments in children's rights research is discussed with the target groups. The website contains general information about KeKi and can be used to access the online database. The online database was developed to make the information about children's rights that KeKi possesses and collects constantly, available for all members of its target groups at any time. The database consists of three sub-databases with (1) legal instruments, (2) Flemish research and (3) publications about

children's rights. The instruments database contains legal instruments and important policy documents on children's rights on the Flemish, federal (Belgian), and international level. The Flemish research database on the other hand contains completed and ongoing research on children's rights conducted at Flemish academic institutions. Finally, the publication database contains a broad scope of (generally peer-reviewed) articles and books in the field of children's rights on the Flemish, federal (Belgian) and international level. KeKi's target groups can consult the online database to help them develop their policies, practice or research.

### **1.5.1 Target groups of KeKi**

KeKi has three main target groups. These target groups are the Flemish government – and its Division of Youth in particular (policy), all youth and children's rights practitioners (practice) and academics from a diversity of disciplines (research) in the field of children's rights. The main contribution KeKi has for the government is to give advice regarding children's rights policies and to make academic knowledge available to support the development of these policies. For practitioners KeKi's main contribution is to make knowledge available and to promote knowledge, understanding and skills with regard to children's rights. Finally, KeKi's goal for academics is to promote collaboration about children's rights between academics from different disciplines.

The Flemish government is a target group in the sense that the Flemish government has certain institutions, like the Youth Department of the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media and the children's rights coalition, that are established to ensure the welfare of children and to develop policies regarding child's rights. The Youth Department for example, is responsible for the preparation and partly for the implementation of youth policies. It also provides substantial support to other governmental actors and practice workers in the form of information, advice, services, subsidies, training, consultation and research.

The second target group, the youth and children's rights actors, focuses on the practice field. For example, one of these organisations is the Flemish Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner. This office receives (warning) signs from children, young people, their immediate environment and professionals. It mediates, investigates complaints and provides policy advice in relation with children's rights in Flanders. Much of their work is based on academic and other sources of knowledge available related to children's rights. They choose on which issues related to children's rights they focus, and strive to put important topics on the government's agenda. Sometimes when they don't agree with the policies developed by the government they need a base on which to strengthen their position about the topic/policy.

The last target group are the academics who are in one way or another involved with children's rights. They are a target group in the sense that KeKi wants to deliver a platform on which researchers from different disciplines can see which topics are current major topics with regard to children's rights and how different disciplines have investigated these topics. This last target group is focused on the field of research.

The interviewees from the group of children's rights professionals interviewed in this study are members from these target groups, because it is assumed that these three target groups cover the range of professionals in the field of children's rights and therefore the focus of this research is on these target groups. It is also expected that these target groups have a broad range of information needs, such as a need for research, policies and/or facts and figures, which contributes to the development of a *general* descriptive model of information seeking behaviour.

### **1.5.2 Other professionals**

In order for the results of this study to be more generalizable the processes of one specific group, the children's rights professionals described before, will be compared and contrasted with the processes of an equal size group of other professionals. The other professionals are randomly selected and their professional fields are as diverse as possible in order to form a general picture of professionals' information seeking behaviour. The group contains professionals from different professional fields such as physiotherapy, (human resource) management and psychology. It is likely that in each of these fields information is needed about research, facts and figures and/or policies. Both the children's rights professionals and the other professionals were interviewed with the same set of questions and analysed with the same coding scheme.

In the next chapter a theoretical framework of information seeking behaviour will be provided, followed by the methodology in chapter 3 and the results in chapter 4. Finally in chapter 5 conclusions will be drawn, and recommendations will be given about the information provisioning to professionals.



## 2. Theoretical framework

The main goal of this study is to chart the information seeking behaviour of professionals in order to identify how the information provisioning to professionals can be improved. This chapter will explore existing literature on information seeking behaviour, including an examination of existing models on information seeking behaviour and its underlying motivations.

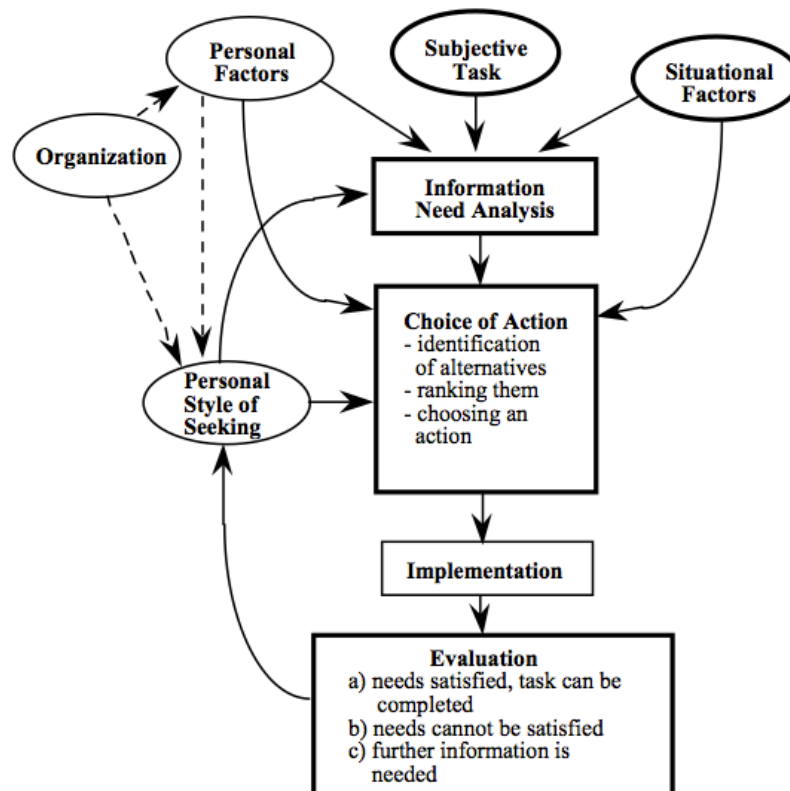
### 2.1 Information seeking behaviour

Before the information seeking process and its underlying factors can be described, it is important to know what information seeking behaviour actually is. Wilson (2000) gives the following definition of information seeking behaviour, which will be used throughout the study:

**Information seeking behaviour** *is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems (such as a newspaper or a library), or with computer-based systems (such as the World Wide Web) (Wilson, 2000, p. 49)*

In general, the theoretical framework in this study to describe the information seeking behaviour is informed by the *Information Seeking Process*-model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) who have the same view as Wilson (2000) on information seeking behaviour. They do not give a definition, but they describe information seeking behaviour by the types of information sought and the channels and sources that are considered/used for finding the information. The model is presented in figure 1 on the next page.

Figure 1: Information seeking process (Byström & Järvelin, 1995, p. 9)



The model in figure 1 contains the three integral parts of information seeking also seen in the definition of Wilson (2000): (1) the information needed as displayed by *information need analysis* in the model, (2) choice for channels and sources displayed as *choice of action* and (3) the factors underlying information needs and choice of action. According to Byström & Järvelins' model subjective task, personal and situational factors influence the information need, which leads to a choice of action. In addition to the personal and situational factors the choice of action is also influenced by a personal style of seeking. The choice of action is then followed by an implementation and evaluation phase (Byström & Järvelin, 1995). These concepts are elaborated on in paragraphs 2.2-2.7.

Other researchers present similar models, which, in addition to the model of Byström & Järvelin, have been used as a base in a wide variety of information behaviour studies before (e.g. Robson, 2012; Van den Boer & Pieterse, 2012; Shafique, 2013). For example in Wilson's first model (Wilson, 1981) the information

seeking process starts with an information need, which in turn leads to an information seeking process. The basic supposition of the model of Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain (1996) is that the roles and tasks undertaken in daily practice lead to information needs, which in turn lead to an information seeking process. In Krikelas' model, information needs stem from a need creating event/environment, which then leads to information gathering activities (Krikelas, 1983).

The model of Byström & Järvelin is useful as basis in this study because it provides a background for the conceptualization of information behaviour and it 'presents a useful way of thinking about how information users operate' (Case, 2008, p. 129). Furthermore, the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) is descriptive and therefore a good starting point for this study. What makes the model of Byström & Järvelin best suitable to this research is that in contrast to other influential general models of information seeking like Wilson's First model (Wilson, 1981), Leckie's model (Leckie, Pettigrew & Savolainen, 1996) and Krikelas' model (Krikelas, 1983), the model of Byström & Järvelin includes personal, situational and organizational factors and therefore it presents a more complete view of underlying factors influencing the information seeking process. In an extensive literature review, de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry (2006) showed that these contextual (work related), situational (organizational, environmental), personal/socio cultural and informational factors are the key dimensions used to study channel choice (de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry 2006). Furthermore, the models of Krikelas (1983) and Leckie, Pettigrew & Savolainen (1996) don't contain an evaluation/feedback loop, thus are not as complete as the Byström & Järvelin (1995) model.

Byström & Järvelin's (1995) motivations for information seeking behaviour are derived from earlier research on channel and source choice. In contrast to Byström & Järvelin, in these studies, channel and source characteristics are regarded as influencers of the choice of action. Source characteristics like accessibility and usability influence the choice for sources (Leckie et al., 1996; Savolainen, 1999), while channel characteristics like response speed, possibility to interact,

personalization and number of cues influence the choice for channels (Van den Boer & Pieterse, 2012; Daft & Lengel, 1984).

What can be concluded from the previously described theories is that task characteristics, channel/source characteristics, situational factors and personal factors appear to be the main determinants of choice of action. The different information seeking process elements and their motivators will be described in detail in the rest of this chapter. It will follow the structure of the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995), starting with the subjective task, personal and situational factors. In chapter 4, the results will be compared and contrasted with the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) to see whether or not the model can be adjusted/expanded.

## **2.2 Subjective task, personal and situational factors**

In the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) the information seeking process starts with the subjective task which influences the information need. According to the model, the other factors that influence the information need are personal and situational factors. These factors will be described in more detail in the following sections.

### **2.2.1 Subjective task**

'Task complexity and the related structure of the problem are connected to the types of information people are looking for and using and to patterning of search strategies' (Vakkari, 1999, p. 834). This relationship between the task and the use of information channels and sources has been empirically studied in various settings (Mote, 1962; Byström & Järvelin, 1995; Tiarniyu, 1992; Vakkari, 1999; Kim, 2002; Landry, 2006). In their research, Byström & Järvelin (1995) mainly investigated how task complexity affects information seeking and use. For task complexity Byström & Järvelin (1995) use the same uni-dimensional complexity categorization as Tiarniyu (1992): the apriori determinability of, or uncertainty, about task outcomes, process and information requirements (Byström & Järvelin, 1995, p. 5). The perception of

respondent's task complexity is the subjective task. The more complex a task is, the more the complexity of the information needed increases and the more information about the problem is needed. This also means that more channels and sources are consulted (Byström & Järvelin (1995). Tiarniyu (1992) researched the relationship between source use and characteristics of work and found that the more complex a task is, the more sources will be used. They also found that external sources (sources outside the organization) are more often used for complex activities than for less complex activities whereas internal sources (sources within the organization) will be more used for less complex activities. Research of Kim (2002) showed that people use more sources and spend more time searching for information when the information needed for the task is unclear. Contrary to known item tasks (such as facts/numbers) subject search tasks (research reports/views) required searchers to spend more time because the subject search task resulted in more search activities (Kim, 2002). Finally it is also found by Thomas (2012) that nurses' information needs can be seen to result from the roles undertaken by them in daily practice.

Much of this research focusing on work characteristics seems to be based on the research of Mote (1962) as described in Wilson (2000). Mote (1962) identified three groups of scientists at Shell Research Ltd. according to the character of the discipline within which they worked: (1) those working in fields with well defined 'width' of subject, (2) those concerned with a wider subject area and less well-organized information and (3) those who cover more subjects, with problems involving greater variation and almost non-existent organization of the literature. Mote (1962) found support for the hypothesis that there is an increasing need for information through the three groups. He concluded that self-service libraries best fit group 1 and that groups 2 and 3 needed more intensive, information-worker support.

In the context of the current study it is assumed that the target groups (children's rights professionals and other professionals) will have different information needs and have different choices of action influenced by their subjective tasks. By including subjective task as a topic in the interview, it is also possible to gain insight whether

work characteristics or for example organization appear to be of more influence on the information seeking behaviour of professionals. All statements about the influence of the job of a person on the information seeking process are regarded as subjective task.

With regard to subjective task, in the interviews questions will be asked about a recent process an interviewee worked on, how he would characterize the information needed and if/how it influenced the choice for channels and sources used (appendix A, questions 6-9). The interview questions are explained in more detail in chapter three. A qualitative analysis will then be conducted to determine how the subjective task influences the information seeking process of (children's rights) professionals.

### **2.2.2 Personal factors**

'One of the most important entities in information seeking remains the information seeker with his/her key characteristics having an effect upon preferred search strategies' (Malliari, 2011). According to Byström & Järvelin (1995), personal factors are factors like education, experience, attitude, motivation and mood.

A model that contains personal factors as factors just like the before mentioned model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) is the model of Johnson (1997) as explained by Case (2008). Furthermore, the Channel Expansion Theory of Carlson & Zmud (1994) builds on the assumption that experiences affect the channel choice. The main assumption is that when experience with a channel increases, its richness increases as well. They call this the 'channel expansion effect' (Carlson & Zmud (1994). Johnson (1997) adds direct experience as a personal factor. Direct experience is the degree to which someone knows something about the domain of interest, and knows about the ways of how to find information about it. Case (2008) states that a key concept of direct experience is the social network of the individual with an information need: who does he know that might know the answer to his question or how to obtain it (Case, 2008, p. 133). In the context of this study, this means, for

example that participants with a huge network are less inclined to use KeKi as a source to obtain information because they already have good sources at their disposal. According to Thomas (2012), personal factors incorporate educational level, knowledge base, age and time since qualifying (Thomas 2012). This has been confirmed by research of Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) and the literature study by de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry (2006). Other factors confirmed by Van den Boer & Pieterse are personal preference and habit. According to them people have a personal preference for certain channels or use them out of habit. Bertulis & Cheeseborough (2008) concluded that awareness that information is relevant and important is possibly more important than simply improving access. The latter might be specifically interesting in the present study because for example it is assumed that practice workers have a different attitude towards scientific information than academics.

Other personal factors that influence the choice of action that have been found by previous research are academic status (Rowlands, 2008), domain knowledge (Jenkins, 2003), computer & web experience (Jenkins, 2003), search experience (Tsai, 2009).

This study will explore if and which personal factors influence the information seeking behaviour of (children's rights) professionals. In order to do this, in the interviews questions will be asked about personal preference, experience and other personal factors (appendix A, questions 12-15).

### **2.2.3 Situational factors**

According to Trevino et al. (1995) situational factors are factors like time, distance and access to channels that influence the information seeking process (Trevino et al., 1990). Byström & Järvelin (1995) only mention available time as a situational factor. Savolainen (2006) also suggested that time is a significant context in information seeking: 'If time is a scarce resource for information seekers, the time available for information seeking usually permits people to access and only use a limited set of

information sources' (Savolainen, 2006, p. 116). More recently Prabha, Connaway, Olszewski & Jenkins (2007) reported that time can affect the thoroughness of information seeking and the sources assessed. Results from a research of Pullinger (1999) into the motives of using an online source instead of a physical library indicated available time and distance to a source as important variables (Pullinger, 1999). Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) found out that besides available time and (physical) distance, place and point of time influence choice of action.

In the context of this study, the situational factors mean that the time participants have available during projects to search for information might influence which channels and sources they use. Furthermore also the place where they are (e.g. in an office/in front of a desk with computer) might affect which channels and sources they use. Finally it will be examined whether or not proximity of sources is of influence in this specific context. This study will also show which other situational factors influence the information seeking process of (children's rights) professionals. Questions will be asked about if and how the (physical) environment and other situational factors (like time) influence the choice of action of professionals (appendix A, questions 10-11).

### **2.3 Information needs**

Central in the model of Byström & Järvelin is the concept of information need analysis. According to Belkin et al. (1982) an information need is a gap between a worker's knowledge about the task and the perceived requirements of the task. There are three types of information needs: (1) problem information, (2) domain information and (3) problem solving information (Byström & Järvelin, 1995). They define those categories as:

- *Problem information*, which describes the structures, properties and requirements of the problem at hand.
- *Domain information*, which consists of known facts, theories, models, concepts and laws in the domain of the problem.



- *Problem solving information*, which describes how problems should be seen and formulated, what problem and domain information should be used and how it should be used in order to solve the problem (Byström & Järvelin, 1995, p. 7-8).

This classification of information needs is rather abstract. Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain (1996) presented a similar model to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) but elaborated more on information needs. With regard to information needs, they distinguish between the type of information needed and characteristics of information needed. For the type of information needed they distinguish between types like research related information, information related to professional development, specific information, developments in the field and views. These information types are dependent on the tasks a person performs (Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain, 1996). In a study about the information needs of health care professionals, Thomas (2012) distinguished between information about patients, policies and procedures, information about drugs, dressings and information about medical conditions (Thomas, 2012).

Urgency, frequency and complexity are often regarded as important information need characteristics. Urgency means whether or not it is urgent to find information and frequency means whether or not the information need is recurring. Complexity means whether an information need is a direct question (like for example the need to know a certain law/guideline) or a complex need that requires a synthesis of different kinds of data (Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain, 1996).

It is proposed that the distinction between types and characteristics of information can also be applied to (children's rights) professionals as they seek information relevant to the projects they are working on. Because the types of information needed by children's rights professionals has not been researched yet, we will be collecting information about the respondents' perception of the types of information needed. In the codebook (appendix D), a distinction will be made between different

types of information needed and characteristics of information needs. The types of information will emerge from the data. The characteristics of information needs are based on the information need characteristics described by Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain (1996) and van den Boer & Pieterse (2012): urgency, frequency and complexity.

In the interviews questions will be asked about what kind of information the (children's rights) professionals need for their work and what the characteristics of their information needs are (appendix A, questions 1-4).

## **2.4 Motivations for choice of action**

According to Byström & Järvelin (1995) the choice of action is influenced by the information need, personal factors and situational factors. These factors have been described in the previous sections. However, the motivations for choice of action that have been distinguished by other researchers will be described in the following sections.

### **2.4.1 Channel and source characteristics**

A factor that is lacking in the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) are the channel and source characteristics. Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain (1996) found that the most important variables with regard to source characteristics are trustworthiness (how reliable or helpful), packaging (convenience, usefulness), timeliness (found when needed), cost, quality (level of detail, accuracy) and accessibility (relative ease of access) (Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain, 1996). In the model of Savolainen (1999), next to perceived accessibility, usability and perceived strengths and weaknesses also have a positive influence on the choice for a certain channel or source. The higher the accessibility and usability and the more perceived strength, the more an individual is inclined to use a certain channel (Savolainen, 1999). This is in line with the findings of Leckie et al. (1996). The literature study by de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry (2006) showed that source accessibility and quality are the source characteristics most often mentioned in the literature. According to their review

source quality consists of accuracy, authoritativeness, comprehensiveness, credibility, currency, reliability (individual/institutional) and validity (de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry, 2006).

Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) showed that channel characteristics are somewhat different from source characteristics. The channel characteristics that emerged from their study are response speed, interaction possibility, degree of personality, moment and length of contact, number of signals, language, completeness of information and ability to capture information (Van den Boer & Pieterse, 2012). Originally, Daft and Lengel (1984) identified some of these characteristics in their Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984). Information richness is defined as the ability of information to change understanding within a time interval (Daft & Lengel, 1986, p. 560). According to MRT, media vary in richness and can be ranked from low to high in richness based on their ability to give immediate feedback, provide multiple cues, be personalized and vary in language. Different media are suited for different tasks, this is why Daft & Lengel state that media low in richness (written media, email) are suited in tasks to reduce uncertainty and media high in richness (such as face-to-face) are better suited to reduce equivocality. The former channel characteristics affect the choice of action. de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry (2006) add ease of use and format as channel characteristics.

This study will show which of the aforementioned source and channel characteristics are important for (children's rights) professionals and if there are other source and channel characteristics that are of influence on the choice of action.

During the interviews, every time an interviewee mentions a specific choice of action it is asked why and which characteristics of the channel/source influence this choice (for example appendix A, question 14).

### 2.4.2 Organizational factors

In the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995), there is limited attention for the influence of the organisation in the information seeking process. They propose that there might be an influence of the organisation on the personal style of seeking and on the personal factors but not on the information need or choice of action (Byström & Järvelin, 1995).

One of the main arguments of the Social Influence Model of Fulk et al. (1990) is that media characteristics are perceptions that are influenced by coworkers (Fulk et al., 1990). For example, when a co-worker indicates that databases are very useful and important to use to search for information, it is likely that his colleagues also start to see databases as useful and important. Other studies also highlighted the influence of others on information seeking behaviour (de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry, 2006; Barrett, 2005). The literature study of de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry (2006) also showed that organizational culture, structure and the technology made available by the organization influence the choice of action (de-Alwis, Majid & Chaudhry, 2006). Finally, Foster (2003) found that the surrounding organizational climate affected funding and access to (re)sources (Foster, 2003). This means that organizational budget is of influence on the accessibility of a source.

In the codebook (appendix D), all statements about the influence of organizational budget on the choice (or accessibility) of a source will be categorized under organizational budget. This is different from the factor cost under source characteristics, because those statements are about the influence of cost apart from the organization. Furthermore, this study will explore which other organizational factors influence the information seeking behaviour of children's rights professionals. This will be done by asking questions about if and how information search habits in the organization, influence of colleagues and other organizational factors influence the choice of action of professionals (appendix A, questions 16-18).

## 2.5 Choice of action

Central in the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) is the choice of action. They regard the choice of action as the identification of information channels and sources, ranking them and choosing an action. As the complexity of information increases, the number of channels/sources used increases and the usage of external channel/sources increases (Byström & Järvelin, 1995). They make no distinction between a source and a channel regarding choice of action. There is however a difference between a source and a channel according to van den Boer & Pieterse (2012, p. 47):

**A source** is a person or organization that delivers information to an individual or another organization.

**A channel** is the communication used to have contact with a source.

Examples of sources are KeKi, the government, family and colleagues. Examples of channels are face-to-face communication, documents, phone, e-mail, and websites.

It is an important difference in this study because in the context of this study it is not only important to find out what sources (children's rights) professionals use but also which channels. For example, there are a lot of different sources with information about children's rights. KeKi strives to be a frequently consulted source for this information about children's rights by its target groups, so next to knowing what the information needs of the target groups are and which channels they use, it is important to find out what sources the target groups actually consult to find their information and why. The used sources and channels will emerge from the data (see appendix A for the interview questions).

## 2.6 Implementation and evaluation

In their study, Byström & Järvelin don't elaborate on the implementation and evaluation phase. They regard implementation as the actual use of a source or channel. After the implementation, the evaluation phase takes place. In the evaluation phase it is assessed whether or not the information needs are satisfied. In Wilson's first model the evaluation phase is displayed as satisfaction or non-satisfaction with the information found (Wilson, 1981). When the information needs are not satisfied and further information is needed, more information seeking processes are needed (Byström & Järvelin, 1995). Insights about the implementation and evaluation phase will be derived from the description of the information seeking process of professionals, which will be asked in question 5 (see appendix A).

## 2.7 Personal style of seeking

The personal style of information seeking is based on the preferences one has to search for information and evolves on successfulness of previous attempts (Byström & Järvelin, 1995). This means that people are more inclined to use channels and sources they have good experiences with. This way, they develop a so-called personal style of seeking. Carlson & Zmud (1999) found the same connection in their Channel Expansion Theory (1999). In this theory, previous experiences with a channel influence the perception of individuals about the channels richness (Carlson & Zmud, 1999). This also means that good experiences lead to good perceptions of the used channels and sources and thus lead to repeated usage of those channels and sources. In the Leckie model (1996), familiarity with the source and prior success with the source are regarded as source characteristics, but in line with the theories of Byström & Järvelin (1995) and Carlson & Zmud (1999), in this study, these variables are regarded as contributing variables to the personal style of seeking.

This research will explore factors that help contribute to the personal style of seeking by asking whether or not positive experiences with certain information

seeking behaviour leads to repeated usage of channels/sources in the future (appendix A, question 15).

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Methodology and data collection

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. Yin (2003) stated that interviews are essential sources of case study information, principally because most case studies are human affairs and that interviews can provide insights into complex situation. Byström & Järvelin (1995) stated that Interviews are a good way of retrieving data in case studies, and even though interviewing requires more effort than questionnaires, they provide better possibilities for thorough analysis of information needs and seeking (Byström & Järvelin, 1995, p. 10). Although directly observing the information seeking processes of participants might be even more preferable than using semi-structured interviews, direct observation takes more time than is available for this study. In addition to these practical reasons, semi-structured interviews are also the main technique of data collection in this study because previous studies already provided background information and underlying factors of information behaviour to create a focused framework for the semi-structured interviews.

The interviews were structured according to the factors emerging from the theoretical framework to ensure that specific factors were focused on with the interviewees. However, the researcher was open to new issues and this was achieved through the use of open-ended questions. The interview questions are based on previous research. Interview questions used by Byström & Järvelin (1995) will be used as background questions about the participants and their information needs (questions 1-6). The questions about the factors underlying the information behaviour of participants are derived from the study of van den Boer & Pieterse (2012). Questions from this study are used because it is also a study of professionals (business owners) who seek complex information, however in a different context. By using the same questions for the similar underlying factors influencing information



seeking behaviour, the present study can complement the study of van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) and demonstrate the usefulness of their instrument in a different context.

The underlying factors of information seeking behaviour that are addressed in the interviews are task characteristics (questions 7-9), situational factors (questions 10-11), personal factors & personal style of seeking (questions 12-15) and organization (questions 16-18) (see appendix A for the complete interview scheme). Every time an interviewee mentioned the use of a particular channel/source it was asked why, in order to gain an insight in the channel and source characteristics that influence the choice of action of the interviewee. Using this structure, it was ensured that all factors arising from the literature review were addressed.

In addition to the questions in the interview scheme, every time an interviewee named certain sources and channels he or she used, the interviewer also asked which were the reasons to use specific channels and sources. To ensure the interviewees responses wouldn't be limited to the factors that emerged from the theoretical framework in the last stage of the interview, it was also asked whether there were factors of importance that were not addressed yet (question 22).

### **3.1.1 Procedure**

Interviews have been conducted with twenty-nine participants. The interviews were conducted (individually) face-to face and were voice-recorded. All interviewees are questioned in their normal work context, in this study the place of their work, as recommended by Lincoln & Guba (1985) to enhance contextual richness. Interviewing in the work place allows the interviewees to refer to bookshelves, boxes of documents, Web sites and databases as concrete illustrations of normal practice (Foster, 2004). Before questioning the participants they were shortly introduced to the topic and goal of the study and informed about the procedure. A written explanation of the procedure and a consent form were provided (appendix

C) before each interview began. This way, informed consent was obtained. The duration of the interviews varied between 30 and 60 minutes.

### **3.2 Sample and demographics**

The first group of participants consists of children's rights professionals from the different target groups of KeKi. As already mentioned, KeKi has three main target groups. These target groups are the Flemish government, youth and children's rights practitioners and academics. Because the interviewees from the group of children's rights professionals are members of KeKi's target groups the sampling technique used was in fact convenience sampling. However, because the target groups differ in their fields of work it can be expected that the participants have different patterns of information behaviour and different information needs.

For the selection of participants from KeKi's target groups, there were certain inclusion criteria to help make sure useful information comes from the interviews (Mortelmans, 2009):

- The participants should have an interest in using the online database and KeKi in general.
- Equal numbers of respondents from each of KeKi's target groups will be interviewed.
- Respondents should have higher education (preferably professional education or university)
- Respondents need information/literature for professional development and purposes.

At the beginning of the data collection phase, members of KeKi's target groups were invited via email sent to organisations from the different target groups (see appendix B<sup>1</sup>). This approach did not prove very effective, so the remaining participants were found by contacting them via telephone. Based on the responses, appointments

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix B and C are in Dutch, because the respondents were Dutch speaking.

were made. This resulted in the fact that from each of KeKi's target groups, at least 5 people were interviewed, resulting in a number of  $n=16$  participants.

The remaining group of participants consists of 'other professionals'. These professionals come from different fields of work, for example this group includes physiotherapists, (human resource) managers and psychologists. It is aimed to include professionals from different fields in order to gain an insight in the information seeking behaviour of professionals in general. The inclusion criteria for this group were:

- Respondents should have higher education (preferably professional education or university)
- Respondents need information/literature for professional development and purposes.

For these remaining professionals, the same approach was used: these respondents were sought using the email from appendix B or by directly contacting them via telephone (when a contact number could be found) in case they did not respond within five working days. Because it proved hard to reach the target number of participants, in the last phase a snowballing technique was used to reach a comparable group size of 13 other professionals, which makes a **total number of  $n=29$  interviewees**. Given the limited time and resources available, the number of interviewees was maximized.

Heterogeneity of the participants is likely warranted because the different target group members differ in variables like education, gender, age and work type. So although the participants are selected, the selected participants will provide insight into differences in information seeking behaviour of different target groups.

The sample includes professionals from different fields of work based on the target groups of this study, as shown in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Characteristics respondents**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Other professionals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total N</i>	<i>%</i>
Men	2	12	9	69	11	38
Women	14	88	4	30	18	62
Work Type						
- Practice Worker	4	25	10	77	14	48
- Researcher	8	47	0	0	8	28
- Policy worker	4	25	3	23	7	24
Education						
- University degree	15	94	5	38	20	69
- Professional education	1	6	7	54	8	28
- Vocational education	0	0	1	8	1	3
Age ranges						
- 20-29	2	12	2	15	4	14
- 30-39	10	62	3	31	13	45
- 40-49	4	25	4	33	8	28
- 50-59	0	0	3	23	3	10
- 60-69	0	0	1	8	1	3
<i>Total N</i>	<i>16</i>		<i>13</i>		<i>29</i>	

The fact that the largest part of the respondents has a university degree can be explained by the fact that the nature of their work requires academic education. Finally, age ranges are spread but the most common age range of the interviewees is 30-39 years.

### 3.3 Analysis

All interviews were fully transcribed as soon as possible after conducting the interviews. This ensured the gathered information to remain clear, and to prevent misinterpretation. After this, the interviews were analysed using a combination of inductive and deductive analysis as proposed by Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006). An inductive analysis primarily uses detailed readings of data to derive concepts, themes or a model through interpretations made from raw data by the researcher (Thomas, 2006). Deductive coding means that categories are derived from a theoretical framework (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This approach to qualitative data analysis is appropriate for this research because this research aims to gain new insights into the motives for information seeking behaviour of children's rights professionals while contributing to and incorporating existing models of information seeking behaviour.

First, the interview transcripts were entered into the ATLAS.ti software program, which was used to identify relevant elements by searching for text fragments in which participants were talking about motives for their information seeking behaviour and which channels/sources they used. The dividing of the interviews into fragments was discussed with an additional researcher. First, they both divided 4 of the same transcriptions into fragments and then compared and discussed them to determine what would be considered as an individual text fragment. Afterwards, the main researcher fragmented all interview transcripts, and finally they discussed this fragmenting to reach agreement. This resulted in a total of **738 text fragments**, which means there are **25.4 fragments per interview**.

Second, the elements were coded in the researchers' office. The initial categories were derived from the theoretical framework (deductive). This is the template approach of Crabtree and Miller (1999) as described by Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006). The template approach involves creating a template in the form of a codebook to be applied as a means of organizing text for subsequent interpretation.

This template for this study was developed a priori, based on the research question and the theoretical framework (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). During the coding of the transcripts, inductive codes were assigned to segments of data that described a new theme observed in the text (inductive). This way, all relevant themes were extracted from the data as categories and subcategories. In consultation with the additional researcher these categories were refined in order to increase reliability. On the basis of this process, a coding scheme was developed (Appendix D) with 9 main categories and associated subcategories.

Categories in the coding scheme have two features: (1) Category label: a word or short phrase used to refer to the category. (2) Description: a description of the meaning of the category, including characteristics, scope and limitations (Thomas, 2006). For the complete coding scheme, see Appendix D. There are main categories like *information needs* with subcategories like the *information types policies/procedures/regulations, views or research*. When a text fragment could be assigned to a main category, but it didn't fit to one of the subcategories it was assigned to the main category.

In addition to the researcher two additional coders coded the interview data of 8 interview transcriptions. The co-coders were presented a prepared file in ATLAS.ti with 8 interview transcripts and both the researcher and the co-coders coded the marked elements of these transcripts in ATLAS.ti using the codebook prepared by the researcher. This independent parallel coding determines and increases the reliability of the coding.

To ensure the reliability of the codes, the inter-coder reliability is calculated (table 3.2).

**Table 3.2: Reliability between coders**

	Cohen's Kappa (k)
Researcher – co-coder 1	0,769
Researcher – co-coder 2	0,828
Average	0,796

Because this is a high score, it is likely that the categories are clear enough. A discussion was conducted on the points on which no agreement was achieved. This resulted in some minor changes to the codebook. Based on this, the final codebook (Appendix D) was drawn.

After this, notable results were identified and it was investigated whether there are patterns present in the answers and mentioned categories. Also, it was investigated whether or not there are notable differences between the target groups. Based on the coding scheme and analysis a model has been developed of the motives of the information seeking behaviour of professionals.

## 4. Results

This chapter will present the findings of the interviews described in chapter three. The description of the results will be presented based around the research questions of this research, following the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995). This will provide an answer to research questions 1 and 2:

Research question 1: *Which elements can be distinguished in the information seeking process of professionals?*

Research question 2: *What are professionals' motives for their choice of action, in particular their choice for specific channels and sources?*

During the description of the information seeking process and the motivations for information seeking behaviour and use of channels and sources in particular a comparison will be made between children's rights professionals and 'other' professionals to answer research question 3:

Research question 3: *Are there differences in the information seeking behaviours of professionals from different fields of work/target groups?*

### 4.1 Subjective task, personal and situational factors

As has been outlined in chapter 2 in the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) the information seeking process starts with the subjective task which influences the information need. According to the model, the other factors that influence the information need are personal and situational factors. This section will show in what way these factors have an influence on the information seeking process according to the interviewees.



### 4.1.1 Subjective task

According to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) the information seeking process starts with the subjective task, which influences the information need. All statements about the influence of the job of a person on the information seeking process are regarded as subjective task. The interviews revealed that the professionals make a clear distinction between the influence of the job itself on the information seeking process on the one hand, and the influence of specific themes/subjects within the job on the information seeking process on the other hand (see table 4.1 for a summary of the findings). This means the difference between *theme/subject* and *job* is that statements related to *job* are about the job in general, while a *theme/subject* is for example a certain project.

**Table 4.1: Subjective task**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>		<i>Other professionals</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	fragments	n	fragments	n	fragments
Job	7	12	2	5	9	17
Theme/subject	10	14	1	1	15	15

Nine of the interviewees indicated that their information need is determined by their **job**. Interviewee 18 (OP) states that her job as a tax return assessor affects her information need<sup>2</sup>:

*'Als je aangiftes beoordeelt heb je informatie nodig over de aangifte dus dan ga je echt kijken van, dat is dan communicatie op schriftelijk en telefonisch gebied om meer info te krijgen over de aangifte.'*

*'When you assess tax returns you need information about the tax return so there will be written communication and communication by telephone to get more information about the tax return.'*

<sup>2</sup>Each original quote will be followed by an English translation, CRP stands for children's rights professional and OR stands for other professional.

The job does not only influence the information need. With regard to the job interviewee 1 (CRP) indicated that her channel choice depends on her job because she uses channels that already use the language that she has to communicate with in her job:

*‘Ik geef bijvoorbeeld een voorbeeld. Je hebt het VN kinderrechtenverdrag. En ik raadpleeg dan regelmatig de kindvriendelijke versie. Niet omdat ik niet kan begrijpen wat erin staat, maar het staat al in dezelfde taal waarin ik zou moeten communiceren, dus.’*

‘I will give an example. There is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. And I always refer to the child-friendly version. Not because I don’t understand the normal version, but because it already is in the same language in which I have to communicate, so.’

Table 4.1 shows that most of the children’s rights professionals (10 out of 16) indicate that a specific **theme/subject** is of influence on their information seeking process, while only 1 of the other professionals indicates that it is of influence. For example interviewee 2 (CRP) indicated that her choice for channels and sources is influenced by the theme she is working on. She stated:

*‘Ja dat hangt natuurlijk enorm af van de thematiek waar rond je werkt he...Voor child budgeting euh, moet ik eigenlijk toegeven dat ik hoofdzakelijk, aangezien daar op Belgisch vlak nog niet veel rond bestaat, via Google heb gewerkt.’*

‘Yes, ofcourse it depends greatly on the themes you work on...For child budgeting eh, I have to admit that I primarily, because on the Belgian level there is not much to find about it, I used Google.’

Interviewee 8 (CRP) also stated that the theme is of influence on the choice for her channels and sources:

*‘Maar met die minder wetenschappelijke cijfermatige thema’s ben ik ook altijd geneigd om op internet standpunten op te zoeken van organisaties.’*

‘But with the less scientific numerical themes I am always inclined to search the Internet for views of other organizations.’

Moreover, interviewee 8 (CRP) also said that her information seeking behaviour also depends on the sector where she has to deal with in a certain project:

*‘Dus dat is bijna in elke sector een heel andere manier van informatievergaring.’*

‘So in almost every sector there is a complete different way of information gathering.’

When the results from the children’s rights professionals and other professionals are compared it is notable that children’s rights professionals mention factors related to subjective task much more often than other professionals. They mentioned 26 fragments about subjective task while the other professionals only mention subjective task 6 times. This indicates that they perceive the influence of subjective task on the information seeking process to be much higher as is the case for the other professionals, because it’s not only mentioned by more children’s rights professionals, most of them also mentioned the influence of subjective task more than one time.

The statements related to subjective task revealed that, according to the interviewees, subjective task both influences the information need and the choice of action, contrary to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995), in which it only influences the information need.

### 4.1.2 Personal factors

The interviewees mentioned different personal factors that impacted their information seeking process. These factors have been summarized in table 4.1.2.

**Table 4.1.2: Personal factors**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>		<i>Other professionals</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	fragments	n	fragments	n	fragments
Network	7	10	1	1	8	11
Experience/knowledge base	6	10	1	1	7	11
Education	4	6	0	0	4	6
Years experience on the job	4	5	3	3	7	8
Awareness	3	3	2	2	5	5
Habit	5	8	6	7	11	15
Preference	9	15	4	5	13	20
Familiarity with a channel	5	6	1	1	6	7
Familiarity with a source	6	10	1	2	7	12
Other personal factors	3	3	1	1	4	4

As becomes clear from table 4.2 preference (n=13), habit (n=11) and network (n=8) are mentioned the most by the interviewees.

**Preference** appears to be the most important personal factor in the information seeking process. It is mentioned by 13 of the interviewees and there are 20 fragments related to preference. According to the interviewees preference both influences channel choice and source choice. People have a preference for some channels and sources over others. With regard to the influence on channel choice interviewee 6 (CRP) stated that she has a preference for personal contact, and this is why she prefers calling people or meet with them:

*'...doordat ik het liefst mensen persoonlijk spreek bel ik dus het snelst of spreek ik af.'*

*'...because I prefer to speak to people personally I will call them or I will make an appointment.'*

Interviewee 21 (OP) also indicated that he prefers personal contact and that this is why he is not inclined to use email:

*‘Als het kan dan euh geef ik voorkeur om persoonlijke communicatie te doen. Intern loop ik liever naar m’n collega toe, vandaar dat ik er net ook was, ook had ik het kunnen e-mailen maar dat doen we niet.’*

‘If it’s possible I prefer personal communication. Internally I prefer walking to my colleague, that’s why I was there a moment ago, I also could have send him an email but we don’t do this.’

These former statements show that preference is of direct influence on channel choice. The interviewees also indicate that preference influences source choice. One of the interviewees stated that his personal preference determines that he reads certain newspapers instead of others:

*‘Als ik het nieuws lees dan ga ik niet naar het laatste nieuws maar ga ik naar de kranten De Morgen en De Standaard. Daar speelt echt wel een persoonlijke voorkeur’* (interviewee 12, CRP).

‘When I read the news I won’t read *Het Laatste Nieuws* but I will read *De Morgen* and *De Standaard*. This is definitely my personal preference.’

The most solid statement about the influence of **habit** on information seeking came from interviewee 28 (OP). He said that habits in his information seeking process arise in time, and that you will always seek information the way you are used to:

*‘Ik denk dat er zeker gewoonten ontstaan. Vooral als je heel lang al in een bepaald patroon denkt en doet, dan ben je op een gegeven moment vastroest in die informatie structurering, vergaring.’*

‘I think certain habits arise. Especially if you have thought and acted in a certain manner for a long time, after a period of time you’ll be entrenched in a certain information structuring and gathering.’

When asked why another interviewee always uses Google as his search engine he responded that he uses Google out of habit:

*‘Voornamelijk gewoonte. Ik heb die anderen nog niet geprobeerd, maar als ik die zou proberen zou ik die misschien vaker gaan gebruiken’ (interviewee 19, OP).*

*‘Primarily habit. I haven’t used others, but if I would I might use them more often.’*

Other notable personal factors that have been mentioned by the interviewees are the **professional network** and experience/knowledge base. Especially for the children’s rights professionals these seem to be important factors since 7 out of 16 children’s rights professionals made statements about their professional network and 6 children’s rights professionals mentioned experience/knowledge base as influential factors in the information seeking process against only 1 of the other professionals. It became clear from the interviews that interviewees with a large professional network often consult people from that network as a source. Interviewee 1 (CRP) stated that she has quite a large professional network and uses this very often when she is seeking information:

*‘Ik heb ook vanuit euh vorige functies en mijn huidige functie uiteraard ook eigenlijk een redelijk breed netwerk ondertussen uitgebouwd. En dat is iets dat ik heel, heel frequent aanspreek.’*

*‘In my current and previous jobs I have built a reasonably wide professional network. And that is something I often use.’*

Another interviewee also described the influence of her professional network on her choice of action. She said that because she has an extensive professional network she often consults these people, and that in case she would not have this network, she would be more inclined to search for information on the Internet:

*‘En zo dat netwerk van die aanspreekpunten, mochten we dat niet hebben zou ik denk ik ook veel meer op Internet, of veel minder persoonsgericht gaan zoeken. Dus het feit dat je een netwerk van personen rond u hebt maakt ook dat je die wel raadpleegt’ (interviewee 4, CRP).*

*‘I think I would be searching a lot more on the Internet, or less personal oriented, if we wouldn’t have this network of contacts. The fact that you have professional network inclines you to use it.’*

These former statements show that the professional network influences which sources the children's rights professional uses.

The interviewees also indicate that they often fall back on sources and channels they already used in previous information seeking processes. For example interviewee 7 (CRP) said that due to her **experience** in the past, she remembers where to find certain chapters, or where to find a specific piece of information:

*'Dikwijls weet ik soms hoofdstukken al staan of weet ik waar dat ik eh waar dat ik het moet openslaan of hoe ik er ga geraken ook.'*

*'Often I already know certain chapters, or I know where to find certain information.'*

Similarly, interviewee 15 (CRP) said that she always knows some names or books from previous information seeking processes that she can use to find additional articles or books:

*'Het is zelden dat wij echt op iets totaal nieuws werken dus je weet op de een of andere manier wel namen of boeken ofzo dat je kan raadplegen. En van daaruit vind je dan artikels of boeken.'*

*'It is seldom that we work on something totally new, so in one way or another you already know names or books that you can consult. And from there you'll find other articles and books.'*

What is notable is that the interviewees did not mention experience in the sense of experience with the actual use of certain channels like search skills or Internet navigation skills.

Another kind of experience is the **years of experience on the job**. It emerges from the interviews that years experience on the job influences the information seeking process. Interviewee 17 (OP) stated that after a few years of working for the same company he now knows exactly where to find certain information. He said that the more often you apply something, the easier you find the information in the future:

*‘Zeker. Dat heeft meer met ervaring te maken, hoe vaker je iets toepast hoe makkelijker je de informatie vindt en weet waar je naartoe moet. Ik kan je een specifiek voorbeeld geven. Bijvoorbeeld bij ons als je een pomp moet hebben, dan ben je aan het begin aan het kijken waar moet ik die informatie vandaan halen. Maar nu is het gewoon standaard, ik weet dat ik deze bronnen tot mijn beschikking heb daarvoor en ik weet dat ik deze informatie daar kan vinden en meteen kan gebruiken. Na verloop van tijd weet je precies waar je moet zijn.’*

‘Certainly. It has to do with experience; the more often you do something the easier it gets to find the information you need. For example, in the beginning I had to search where to get a pump when I needed one. Now it’s just standard, I know which sources I have at my disposal and where I can find what kind of information. After a period of time you exactly know where to look.’

Another interviewee confirms this by saying that because she has been active in her working field for several years, she knows where to find the information she needs:

*‘Doordat ik al heel lang actief weet je op den duur wel veel beter waar alles te vinden is’ (interviewee 7, CRP).*

‘Because I have already been active for a long time I know where to find everything much better than in the beginning.’

What becomes clear from the statements related to experience is that experience especially determines which sources a person uses.

**Familiarity with the channel/source** seems to particularly influence which channels/sources professionals use at the start of the information search. As interviewee 11 (CRP) stated, she starts with literature and organizations she already knows:

*‘Bij mij werkt dat zo, in eerste instantie van hetgeen ik ken. Literatuur, organisaties enzovoort.’*

‘For me it works like that, starting with what I know. Literature, organizations, and so on.’



Habit, preference and experience are of similar importance to both the children's rights professionals and the other professionals and there are no notable differences between the three groups of children's rights professionals. The big difference related to personal factors between children's rights professionals and other professionals is that for the children's rights professionals the professional network is important (7 out of 16 mentioned it) while only one of the other professionals mentioned it as an influential factor.

What is notable is that in this phase, the professionals often start with Google to get a global view about a subject, as interviewee 12 (CRP) stated:

*'Sowieso begin ik met Google.'*

*'I always start with Google.'*

Contrary to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995), according to the interviewees personal factors only influence the choice of action and not the information need.

#### **4.1.3 Situational factors**

In general the interviewees describe the same situational factors as the factors that have emerged from existing research as described in the theoretical framework. These are time, space and distance to a source.

When asked about the situational factors that influence their information seeking process, the two most common answers given by the interviewees are time (20 out of 29) and space (16 out of 29) as can be seen in table 4.1.3.

**Table 4.1.3: Situational factors**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>		<i>Other professionals</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	fragments	n	fragments	n	fragments
Time	14	24	6	7	20	31
Space	10	17	6	9	16	26
Distance to a source	7	9	2	3	9	12

It is notable that almost all children's rights professionals mention time as a situational factor (14 out of 16) while 6 out of 13 of the other professionals mention time. This might be explained because children's rights professionals might have more work pressure than the other professionals, but only further research can determine whether or not work pressure is of influence on the importance of time as a situational factor.

The statements related to **time** have been mentioned the most (31 fragments). Most of these fragments indicate that the amount of time someone has for an information search influences which channels and sources he/she uses. In general the interviewees indicate that they prefer personal contact, calling and the Internet to seek information due to time constraints. For example, interviewee 2 (CRP) mentions that because she has time pressure most of the time she contacts someone from her professional network because her network enables her to quickly know whom she can contact for a certain piece of information:

*'Ik heb op zich niet zoveel tijd en ik heb wel een tamelijk ruim netwerk dus dan weet ik wel snel wie ik moet aanspreken.'*

*'I don't have much time and I do have a large network, so I quickly know who to talk with.'*

Similarly, interviewee 22 (OP) indicated that he prefers using the telephone when time is limited, because he perceives it to be the fastest way to retrieve information:

*'Via Google gaat het vrij snel. Bijvoorbeeld ik merk thuis wel als ik iets euhm, als ik informatie zoek, ligt het eraan hoeveel tijd ik heb. Als ik niet veel tijd heb zoek ik een*

*telefoonnummer, bel ik en wil ik het gelijk weten, en als ik meer tijd heb kan ik wat meer gaan surfen zeg maar.'*

'Using Google works pretty fast. For example, I notice that when I am at home looking for information, it depends on how much time I have. If I don't have much time I'll search for a phone number, and I'll make a call because I want to know it immediately. If I have more time I am more inclined to surf on the Internet.'

The previous quote also indicates that the amount of time available influences the extensiveness of the information search. This means that the situational factor time also influences the information need.

Both groups of interviewees equally mention **space** as a situational factor. Since it has been mentioned more than once by almost all of the interviewees who mentioned it, it is assumed that it's a very important situational factor for the interviewees. Space is a broad concept and this also emerges from the interviews. The interviewees often describe the influence of space in different ways. For example interviewee 24 (OP) mentions that because of the fact that she works in another city than she lives in, she often asks colleagues for information about important locations in the neighbourhood:

*'..ik woon zelf in (stad), dus euh ik ben me ook wel bewust dat ik hier nog geen netwerk heb opgebouwd dus vraag ik ook wel aan medewerkers van goh wat zit hier in de buurt..'*

'I live in (Dutch city), so uh, I'm aware that I haven't built a network here yet so I often ask colleagues what's in the neighbourhood.'

The former quote indicates that because the interviewee works in a different city than she lives in she consults other sources than she normally would (in this case colleagues instead of people from her professional network). On the other hand interviewee 17 (OP) said that he mainly uses the Internet because he works on his computer all day long:

*‘Ja, dat is het makkelijkst en ik zit achter de computer de hele dag dus voor mij is het makkelijkste om direct op internet te gaan.’*

‘Yes, that is most easy, and I work on my computer all day long so for me it’s the easiest to directly search on the Internet.’

Interviewee 20 (OP) describes another influence of space. She said that the fact that they have an office landscape at her work determines that she often uses personal contact with her colleagues when she has a need for information:

*‘Op een positieve manier wel omdat wij hier landschapsbureaus hebben waardoor wij hier heel snel met elkaar in contact komen, elkaar tegenkomen, en snel iets kunnen vragen. Zonder dat wij het zelf moeten opzoeken.’*

‘In a positive way it does because we have a landscape office so we come into contact with each other quickly, run into each other, are able to ask things quickly, without having to search for it ourselves.’

Interviewee 1 (CRP) adds that office landscape also not really stimulates the use of the telephone on top of the fact that it stimulates the fact that she is more likely to ask a colleague:

*‘De omgeving waar je inzit stimuleert echt niet om eens aan uw telefoon te gaan zitten. Maar het makkelijke aan landschapswerken is ook wel van je hebt in 1 oogopslag gezien van die is er en die is er, dus je weet ook wel van als je een vraag hebt van aha ik kan even naar zijn bureau lopen. En dat doe je niet zo snel als je afgescheiden bureaus hebt en als je niet weet van die is er, en of die niet of wel in gesprek is.’*

‘The environment we work in doesn’t really stimulate picking up your phone making a phone call. The easy thing about the landscape office is that you can immediately see who’s available, and you know that when you have a question you can walk to a person’s desk. When you have separate offices you’re not inclined to do such thing, because you don’t know whether or not someone is present or available.’

The former quotes indicate that there are different ways in which space is perceived by the interviewees: the macro environment of the organization (e.g. the city), the

internal environment of the organization (e.g. office landscape or individual offices) and the actual workplace (e.g. desk work stimulates use of computer). These have in common that they all influence the choice of action.

Most statements related to **distance to a source** show that distance to a source particularly is of influence on whether an interviewee calls or mails someone or actually goes to another person for information. Interviewee 6 (CRP) stated that she uses different channels to contact others, depending on the distance to the person she will go to the person, call or mail him/her:

*‘Als je iemand moet contacteren, ja dan gebruik je wel verschillende kanalen, in eerste instantie bellen. Of afhankelijk van hoe ver die persoon is ga je ernaartoe, of mailen.’*

‘If I have to contact someone, I use different channels, but primarily calling. Depending on the distance of the location where that person is I will go to him/her or I will send an email.’

Distance to a source not only influences the channels a professional chooses to use. For example interviewee 2 (CRP) indicated that the distance to a source also is of influence on which sources she consults when she would seek information:

*‘Ik denk dat heel veel te maken heeft met de nabijheid, of dit nu via Internet is of via fysieke nabijheid van bronnen. Mocht ik nu vlakbij de rechtsfaculteit van de KU Leuven zitten bijvoorbeeld dan zou ik daar veel vaker langsgaan, dan zou ik daar veel vaker iets consulteren.’*

‘I think it has a lot to do with proximity, whether this is through the Internet or the physical proximity of sources. If I was close to the Faculty of Law of KU Leuven I would go there much more often, I would search for information there much more often.’

There appear to be no differences in how the situational factors affect the information seeking behaviour of the different groups of professionals.

The findings related to situational factors are in line with the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) who also stated that situational factors both influence the

information need and the choice of action. However, the quotes showed that according to the interviewees in this study, situational factors are of more influence on the choice of action than on the information need.

## 4.2 Information needs

According to Byström & Järvelin (1995) the subjective task, personal factors and situational factors lead to an information need. As described in section 4.1, in the present study only subjective task and situational factors influence the information need, while personal factors are of direct influence on the choice of action. The interviewees were asked to describe a recent occasion where they had a question to answer or a decision to make that needed information to help them. The interviewees indicated what type of information they needed, how they searched for it and why they needed specific types of information and choose for specific channels/sources. This section will describe the information needs of (children's rights) professionals. The results of the different information needs that have been mentioned by the interviewees can be categorised as shown in table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Information needs of professionals**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>	<i>Other professionals</i>	<i>Total</i>
Procedures/regulations/policies	9	4	13
(Children's rights) research	9	0	9
Views/opinions	5	4	9
Facts	4	9	13
Feedback	1	1	2
Other information needs	4	7	11

Table 4.2 shows that thirteen of the interviewees described seeking information about **procedures/regulations/policies**. Especially the children's rights professionals (9) mention this as an information need. Interviewee 1 (CRP) indicates that her preparation consists of consulting the legal framework:

*‘Mijn voorbereiding bestaat meestal echt wel uit het wettelijk kader’.*

‘My preparation usually consists of the legal framework.’

The former quote can be explained by the fact that she is a policy worker.

Among the children’s rights professionals, several interviewees mentioned the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (procedures/regulations/policies) as an information need in their work. Which can be explained by the theme they are working on (children’s rights). For example interviewee 8 (CRP):

*‘Maar ik denk dat ik kan zeggen dat, we proberen toch altijd te starten met te gaan opzoeken wat het VN comité voor de rechten van het kind erover zegt.’*

*‘But I think I can say that, we always try to start with looking up what the UN committee of children’s rights has to say about it.’*

This is an example of the conclusion drawn in 4.1.1 that the subjective task (more specifically: theme/subject) influences the information need.

The second most popular information need is **facts**. As opposed to *procedures/regulations/policies*, this is the most mentioned information need by the other professionals. For example, a chemist stated he needed formulas or information for making calculations:

*‘Formules die ik moet gebruiken, of informatie voor berekeningen, of achtergrondinformatie dat ik nodig heb over bijvoorbeeld voedingsmiddelen’* (interviewee 17, OP).

‘Formulas I have to use, or information about calculations, or background information I need about for example foods.’

Nine of the interviewees described seeking **(children’s rights) research**. One children’s rights professional (an assistant professor) stated she needed research about children’s rights in order to teach the course Children’s Rights:

*'Ik ben assistent dus ten eerste heb ik informatie nodig over jeugdrecht, sociaal beleid, kinderrecht strafrecht. Aangezien ik ook het vak kinderrechten ga mee assisteren' (interviewee 3, CRP).*

'I'm an assistant, so for one thing I need information about juvenile law, social policy, children's rights and criminal law, since I will also assist the course on Children's Rights.'

Table 4.2 indicates that the biggest difference between children's rights professionals and the other professionals with regard to this information need is that all of the professionals that mention research as an information need are children's rights professionals. This can be explained due to the fact that the group of children's rights professionals contains 8 researchers.

It emerges from the interviews that the information needs are of influence on the choice of action. For example one of the interviewees stated that she uses Web of Science when she needs academic literature:

*'...als het echt academisch moet zijn dan ga je vooral op Web of Science zo van die academische dingen zoeken' (interviewee 7, CRP).*

'...If it really has to be academic then you will primarily search on Web of Science, and such academic search engines.'

In general the children's rights professionals group of researchers need research, while the children's rights professional policy makers need procedures/regulations/policies. Practice workers seem to seek a balance between the different kinds of information. This is a clear indication that different the types of professionals have different information needs.

It can be concluded that like in the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) the information need leads to the choice of action.



### 4.3 Motivations for choice of action

According to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) information needs, personal factors and situational factors influence the choice of action. Section 4.1 already described that contrary to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) personal factors only influence the choice of action according to the interviewees, while situational factors both influence the information need and choice of action. Chapter two showed that there are also other motivations for choice of action, namely channel and source characteristics. This section will describe these other motivations for choice of action that influence choice of action according to the interviewees. Also the influence of the organization, of which the influence is unclear in the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995), will be studied.

#### 4.3.1 Source characteristics

Three of the most common source characteristics that have been mentioned by the interviewees are accessibility (n=11), quality (n=11) and trustworthiness (n=9). For a summary of the source characteristics that have been mentioned, see table 4.3.1.

**Table 4.3.1: Source characteristics**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>		<i>Other professionals</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	fragments	n	fragments	n	fragments
Trustworthiness	5	6	4	4	9	10
Packaging	1	1	2	2	3	3
Timeliness	2	2	2	2	4	4
Cost	1	1	0	0	1	1
Quality	8	11	3	5	11	16
Accessibility	9	16	2	4	11	20
Relevance	6	5	0	2	6	6
Influence/image	2	4	0	0	2	4

Table 4.3.1 shows that the interviewees have mentioned **accessibility** most often. First of all it should be noted that accessibility might also influence the choice of a

channel: the more accessible, the sooner the source will be used. Not only is accessibility mentioned by 11 of the interviewees, they also made statements about accessibility more than once when looking at the number of fragments (20). What became apparent from the interviews (see paragraph 4.4) is that the professionals mainly use online sources when it comes to information seeking. Most of the interviewees who regularly use the library or other written channels/sources such as written journals, only do this if something is not available online. This has been stated by interviewee 11 (CRP), who has confirmed this by saying he goes to the library if something is not available online:

*‘Als het echt online niet beschikbaar is ga ik gewoon even naar de bibliotheek. Ik zit hier vlakbij, 5 stappen en ik sta in de bibliotheek dus wat dat betreft maakt het niet veel uit als het niet online is, dan vind ik het in de bibliotheek.’*

‘If it’s really not accessible online I will just go to the library. I’m close to the library, 5 footsteps and I’m at the library so In that respect it doesn’t matter if it’s not available online, then I’ll find it in the library.’

Interviewee 14 (CRP) says that the only written source (and in this case also a channel) she uses is TJK (children’s rights journal), because it is not accessible online:

*‘Het enige schriftelijke kanaal dat ik gebruik is TJK, omdat er geen toegang toe is online.’*

‘The only written channel I use is TJK, because it’s not accessible online.’

The former statements make clear that availability mainly influences whether or not professionals use written channels/sources instead of online channels/sources. When something is available online they will mostly be inclined to choose online channels/sources over offline channels/sources.

The interviewees also indicated that the **quality** of the source results in the (repeated) use of a specific source. Interviewee 4 (CRP) said that she finds that quality is the most important aspect of a source, and that this affects whether or not she uses a source:

*‘Maar ik vind de kwaliteit dat ze nu leveren heel goed en voor mij heeft dat op dit moment wel de bovenhand.’*

‘But the quality they deliver at the moment is very high and for me that is most important at the moment.’

**Trustworthiness** also seems to be an important source characteristic. The interviewees indicated that the amount of trust they have in a source results in the usage of a source. Interviewee 18 (OP) said that she assesses the trustworthiness of information based on the website where she finds the information:

*‘Jawel, je kijkt ook naar de betrouwbaarheid van informatie. Dus op welke website vind je iets. Stel je voor dat ik een bepaalde vraag heb over een belastingaangifte, ik weet niet precies hoe ik die moet verwerken, en ik ergens op een zeg maar forum van allerlei mensen meningen zie, vertrouw ik eerder op de belastingdienst website waar ik iets uitgelegd zie staan hoe het zou moeten zijn.’*

‘Yes, I also look at the reliability of information. So on which site do you find something. Imagine I have a certain question about a tax return and I don’t exactly know how to process it. I would be more inclined to trust the Tax administration website than a forum with opinions from all kinds of people.’

Interviewee 20 (OP) even said that she prefers using a book for background information because she thinks that on the Internet not everything is equally trustworthy:

*‘Ja voor achtergrond informatie pak ik sneller een boek. Want op internet is niet alles betrouwbaar.’*

‘For background information I’m more inclined to read a book. Because on the Internet not everything is reliable.’

Another source characteristic that has been mentioned often is the **relevance** of a source. The interviewees indicate that it is important that they expect the information a source offers is relevant to them. They indicate that when they expect that a source is not relevant to them, they will not use the source. For example

interviewee 13 (CRP) said that they would not use research that has been conducted in an entirely different context:

*‘En soms komen er wel onderzoeken in de pers uit Amerika of Engeland, maar is dit wel relevant voor ons? Dat gaat over een onderzoek dat gevoerd is bij kansarme gezinnen in Manchester. Dat heeft met België niets te maken. Wij gebruiken dat niet zomaar.’*

‘And sometimes studies from the United States or Great Britain are cited in the press, but is this even relevant to us? Those are studies conducted with poor families from Manchester. It has nothing to do with Belgium. We don’t just use it.’

Vice versa, interviewee 16 (CRP) stated that because the themes in a certain journal (TJK) meet their interests and themes, they are inclined to use this journal:

*‘Het tijdschrift leunt helemaal aan bij ons. De artikels die daar inzitten zijn thema’s die vaak rechtstreeks aansluiten bij de thema’s waar wij mee bezig zijn.’*

‘The journal meets our needs. The articles in those journals are about themes that often connect with the themes that we work on.’

There are no clear differences between the source characteristics mentioned by the children’s rights professionals on the one hand and the other professionals on the other. It only stands out that children’s rights professionals mention accessibility more often than the other professionals. This might be explained by the fact that of all the children’s rights professionals interviewed, eight of them are researchers, and thus chances are higher their organization provides them with access to online academic journals. The influence of the organization will be further elaborated on in 4.3.3.

Byström & Järvelin (1995) don’t mention source characteristics in their model, but the results are in line with the model of Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) in which the source characteristics also influence the source choice.

### 4.3.2 Channel characteristics

The largest number of different characteristics that have been mentioned are the channel characteristics. For the most part, these characteristics have been equally mentioned, but the most common channel characteristics that have been mentioned are ease of use (n=19) and immediacy feedback (n=12). For the full list of channel characteristics see table 4.3.2.

**Table 4.3.2: Channel characteristics**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>		<i>Other professionals</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	fragments	n	fragments	n	fragments
Ability to capture information	5	7	3	3	7	10
Immediacy feedback	5	5	7	9	12	14
Interaction possibility	2	2	3	3	5	5
Degree of personality	1	1	3	3	4	4
Moment and length of contact	4	5	1	1	5	6
Number of cues	2	2	2	3	4	5
Actuality	8	9	1	1	9	10
Language	5	6	1	1	7	7
Ease of use	12	19	7	8	19	27
Presentation	7	7	2	2	9	9
Scope	6	7	1	1	7	8
Other channel characteristics	1	2	5	7	7	9

What is most notable from the responses is that interviewees are most inclined to use the Internet and search engines for searching information because the interviewees indicate that these channels are most easy to use (see section 4.4). **Ease of use** has been mentioned by 19 of the interviewees in a total number of 27 fragments and thus appears to be the most important channel characteristic that influences the channel choice of professionals. The easier to use a channel, the more a professional is inclined to use the channel. As interviewee 19 (OP) stated,

according to him the Internet is the easiest way to find information and this is why he often uses the Internet:

*‘Internet is de makkelijkste en het meest kansrijk dat je ook wat vindt. Het voordeel van internet is, die zoekt het op, en levert heel veel informatie, soms teveel, maar je kunt zelf selecteren van o dat en dat en dat, je kunt dingen vergelijken wat het beste bij je past.’*

‘The Internet is the easiest to use and also provides the best chance that you will find something. The benefit from the Internet is that it provides huge amounts of information that you can select yourself, and compare it, to find with best suits your needs.’

Interviewee 3 (CRP) underlines this by saying that ease of use determines that she often uses the Internet and search engines:

*‘Het gebruiksgemak speelt een rol, je kunt dat vanachter uw pc doen he. Je moet je niet echt verplaatsen naar de bibliotheek, en de zoekfuncties, je kan echt heel snel, meestal binnen 5 minuten een heel goed artikel vinden dat je juist nodig had.’*

‘The ease of use plays a big role. You can do it from behind your computer. You don’t have to go to the library, and the search functions allow you to quickly, often within 5 minutes, find a great article that you can use.’

Therefore most interviewees prefer using the Internet over for example books. With regard to this interviewee 17 (OP) said that it is easier and quicker to process information on the computer, whereas by using a book it takes much longer:

*‘Het is veel makkelijker om achter de computer informatie dat je nodig hebt weg te zetten. Als jij Word opent en je doet aan de linkerkant van je pagina Word waar je info in kan zetten en rechts jouw zoekopdracht, dat is voor mij veel makkelijker schakelen. Als je een boek hebt moet je het eerst opschrijven, dat gaat veel langzamer, dat duurt veel langer.’*

‘It’s much easier to process information on your computer. When you open Word you can split the screen to copy the information you find interesting on the left side of your screen, and continue searching on the right side of your screen. It’s much more easier to switch. When you read a book,

you will have to write interesting pieces of information down. That's slower and takes much more time.'

However, if it is purely about reading, a few of the interviewees mentioned that it is easier to read on paper than on a screen. Interviewee 9 (CRP) said that it is more fun and easier to read and mark sentences on a paper version instead of a digital version:

*'Ik vind dat ook leuker om te lezen dan op een scherm. Ik kan dan ook dingen aanduiden. Dat kan ook wel op een digitale versie maar ik vind het gemakkelijker op een papieren versie.'*

'I also find it nicer to read than on a screen. It also allows me to mark things. That's also possible with a digital version, but I find it's easier on a paper version.'

Next to ease of use, **immediacy of feedback** has been mentioned the most by the interviewees. Of the interviewees, 12 out of 29 indicated that immediacy of feedback of the channel influences their choice for a channel. They indicate that they are more inclined to use channels that give immediate feedback. Interviewee 9 (CRP) has indicated this by saying that she often chooses to use the phone when she is in a hurry because she then immediately gets her information, as opposed to email where you do not always get an answer immediately:

*'Soms is bellen nog sneller eigenlijk. Soms mail je en krijg je daar geen antwoord op terwijl als je belt en ze nemen direct op dan kan je direct je informatie hebben. Als ik haast heb zou ik wel eerder gaan bellen naar iemand, als ik die informatie heel snel wil hebben.'*

'Sometimes calling is even quicker actually. Sometimes you send an email and don't get a response to it, whilst calling gives an immediate response. When I'm in a hurry I would be more inclined to call someone, when I need the information as soon as possible.'

Interviewee 28 (OP) reinforces this statement by also indicating that the telephone has higher immediacy of feedback than email and that this ensures that she is more inclined to use the telephone than email:

*'Ik ben wel iemand die snel geneigd is om meteen 1 op 1 contact te zoeken, omdat je dan direct reactie hebt. Email is altijd zo van, je stuurt een email en moet maar afwachten. Als je belt heb je meteen iemand aan de telefoon, en je kan altijd nog een email sturen ter bevestiging.'*

'I'm someone who's inclined to have personal contact, because it provides an immediate response. With email, you just have to wait for a response. When you make a phone call you immediately speak to someone, and you can always send an email afterwards for confirmation.'

Another frequently mentioned channel characteristic is **actuality of the channel**. Interviewees indicate that it is important for channels to have up-to-date information. For example interviewee 27 (OP) indicated that sometimes he has doubts about the up-to-dateness' of links on the website of a supplier which causes him to contact the supplier using another channel to ask about the latest data:

*'Als je ergens op klikt en je haalt iets ergens vandaan over bijvoorbeeld Vestas, soms weet je niet hoe up to date gegevens zijn, en bij een leverancier kan je altijd nog even navragen ik wil de laatste gegevens, wat is jullie laatste model überhaupt bijvoorbeeld he. Je ziet soms wel eens links van 2008 en dan denk je wat heb ik hier nog aan.'*

'If you click something on the Internet, about for example Vestas, you don't always know how up-to-date the information is. At a supplier you can always ask about the latest information, for example about the latest model. Sometimes I see web links from 2008 and I wonder whether I can still use them.'

The **presentation of a channel** also seems to be an important channel characteristic according to the interviewees. The better the presentation of a channel, the more the interviewees are inclined to use a channel. Most of the statements related to presentation of the channel were about the presentation of websites. This indicates that presentation is especially important for websites as a channel. Interviewee 11 (CRP) said that it is very important for a website to clearly show where to click to find certain information without having to click link after link before you can find the information:



*‘De helderheid, dat heel duidelijk is weergegeven van wat dat je waar moet doen zonder daar 10 formulieren voor te moeten invullen of zonder 10x te moeten doorklikken op een website, is van belang.’*

‘The clarity, that it is very clearly shown what to do, without having to fill in 10 forms or without having to click 10 times on a website, is important.’

Interviewee 8 (CRP) also mentions the presentation of the website, and adds the readability of the website. She states that it is important for websites (and online articles) to have a clear structure and to have clear summaries:

*‘Wat dat ik ook een factor vind in het wel of niet gebruiken van informatie is de leesbaarheid en het gemakkelijk terugvinden op internet bijvoorbeeld. Als ik 5 keer moet klikken naar pagina’s en daar en daar..Of als er gewoon een pagina is van kijk dit is onderzocht en daar is de pdf. En er staat dan een duidelijke samenvatting.’*

‘What I think that’s also a factor of importance in whether or not to use information is the readability and the ease of finding information on the Internet. Whether I have to click 5 times to find the right information, or whether it’s a site which clearly shows the information and gives a clear summary.’

Another notable channel characteristic is the **ability of a channel to capture information**. This characteristic is important because for example interviewee 9 (CRP) indicates that she especially uses email, because the ability of that channel to capture information helps in making sure you do not forget who you already contacted, what information that person gave and to have explanations on ‘paper’:

*‘Vooral via mail omdat het soms gebeurt dat je heel veel dingen te doen hebt en als je telefoneert is het soms sneller, maar achteraf weet je niet meer van heb ik nu naar die persoon gebeld? Heeft ie geantwoord? En dat vind ik soms moeilijk aan telefoongesprekken. Het is soms wel handiger. Soms telefoneer ik en zet ik het daarna op mail. Maar alleen telefoneren vind ik een beetje gevaarlijk. Met een email wordt ik eraan herinnerd of ik een persoon al gecontacteerd heb en ook wat die allemaal gezegd heeft. Het is soms wel handig als je de uitleg ook gewoon op papier hebt.’*

‘Especially through email because sometimes you have many things to do and while calling might be quicker, you might not recall who you have called afterwards or whether you got a response. That’s what I find difficult about phone calls. Sometimes it’s convenient so that’s why I sometimes make phone calls, but afterwards I will still send an email. Because I find that just calling is too dangerous. An email reminds me of whom I have contacted and what that person has said. Sometimes it’s also more convenient when you have the explanation on paper.’

Interviewee 17 (OP) adds to this that he uses email for important information and agreements, because it is then on paper:

*‘Belangrijke dingen die je vast wil leggen, gaan wel via de mail. Dan heb je iets op papier staan, mondeling heb je niets aan.’*

‘Important things that you want to capture will be emailed. Then you have something written down, that’s much better than oral agreements.’

There are no differences in the importance of the different channel characteristics between the three groups of children’s rights professionals. When comparing the children’s rights professionals to the other professionals, it is notable that other professionals mention immediacy of feedback much more often (9 out of 13) than the children’s rights professionals (5 out of 16). This is especially notable because section 4.1.3 showed that children’s rights professionals mentioned time as a situational factor much more often than the other professionals, so you would expect the other professionals to find immediacy of feedback more important than the children’s rights professionals.

Just like the source characteristics Byström & Järvelin (1995) don’t mention channel characteristics in their model, but again the results are in line with the model of Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) in which the channel characteristics influence the channel choice.

### 4.3.3 Organizational factors

When asked whether or not the organisation someone was working for had an influence on the information seeking process, the most common factors that were mentioned are influence on/of colleagues and other organizational factors such as the accessibility an organization provides to certain sources. The results have been summarized in table 4.3.3.

**Table 4.3.3: Organizational factors**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>		<i>Other professionals</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	fragments	n	fragments	n	fragments
Budget	2	2	0	0	2	2
Influence on/of colleagues	12	15	6	6	18	21
Culture	4	4	1	2	5	6
Other organizational factors	12	15	9	14	21	29

As becomes clear from table 4.3.3 **influence on/of colleagues** has been mentioned the most by the interviewees. With regard to this factor the interviewees mainly mentioned that they work together with colleagues to find information, give each other tips, exchange contacts with colleagues or share useful links. Interviewee 19 (OP) said that he receives tips from colleagues and often gets links from colleagues where he can find useful information:

*'Je krijgt bijvoorbeeld tips van je moet daar kijken. Of je krijgt een link waar je gelijk allemaal gerichte informatie krijgt wat op dat moment ook actueel is.'*

'For example you get tips about where to look for information. Or you receive a link with all kinds of current targeted information.'

Interviewee 15 (CRP) indicated that he works together with colleagues in finding information and that he exchanges contact information and references with colleagues:

*‘Wat dat we natuurlijk wel doen, en zeker in het begin, je werkt samen met collega’s en die hebben ook referenties of contacten van die of die is interessant.’*

‘What we do, especially in the beginning, is to work together with colleagues who have references or contacts with interesting sources.’

One of the interviewees said that her colleagues share research and reports from their domain with her:

*‘Mijn collega’s geven ook onderzoeken en rapporten door wanneer ze iets tegenkomen binnen hun domein, want wij kennen elkaars domeinen en wij voeden elkaar wel in die zin’* (interviewee 10, CRP).

‘My colleagues also share studies and reports when they find something in their domain, because we know each others’ domain and feed each other in that sense.’

Interviewee 12 (CRP) confirmed the sharing of information with colleagues and adds that mainly email is used for this information sharing:

*‘Collega’s sturen bijvoorbeeld artikels uit de Knack door en dan ga ik nog eens kijken wat dat er verder rond bijvoorbeeld mijn thema’s gepubliceerd is. Ik krijg wel veel mails van collega’s, heb je dat gelezen, of dat?’*

‘For example colleagues send articles from the *Knack* and then I will look what has been published around my theme’s. I get a lot of emails from colleagues who ask whether I have read certain articles.’

There are also other organizational factors that have often been mentioned by the interviewees. Most of these other organizational factors are related to the **access an organization provides** to sources and channels. For example, interviewee 11 (CRP) stated that her organization provides her with access to online journals because her organization is subscribed to a lot of these online journals and that this is why she uses these sources:

*‘Mijn werkgever HoGent is geabonneerd op een heleboel van die tijdschriften online. Dus ik heb daar met een paar muisklikken toegang tot een heleboel informatie.’*

'My employer, HoGent, is subscribed to a lot of online journals. So with a few mouse-clicks I have access to a lot of information.'

Interviewee 21 (OP) also said that his organization has a subscription to online libraries and he adds that his organization also provides telephone, Internet access and an iPad. He stated that his organization enables him to do everything digitally:

*'Ja we hebben dus toegang tot verschillende online bibliotheken. Ik heb geen smartphone maar als ik het wil kan ik hem morgen krijgen, ik heb telefoon, ik heb internet toegang, ik heb een iPad. Ik bedoel, de organisatie faciliteert me volledig zodat ik alles wat ik maar wil digitaal kan doen. Ik mag ook naar het buitenland bellen.'*

'Yes, we have access to different only libraries. I don't have a smartphone but if I want one I can get it tomorrow. I have telephone, Internet access, I have an iPad. I mean, the organization completely facilitates me so I can do everything digitally. I'm also allowed to make international calls.'

The provision of telephone and Internet access by the organization to employees is probably the case for most of the professionals, but they probably take this for granted.

There appears to be no difference between children's rights professionals and other professionals with regard to the influence of the organization.

In the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) the influence of the organization remained unclear. The results from this study show that the organization influences the choice of action through influence on/of colleagues and providing access (or not) to certain channels and sources.

#### 4.4 Choice of action

As stated in section 4.2 an information need leads to a choice of action. Sections 4.1 and 4.3 showed that next to the channel and source characteristics this choice of action is also influenced by the subjective task, situational, personal and organizational factors. In this section an overview will be presented of the sources and channels used by the professionals. Sometimes the difference between sources and channels is unclear. As has been described in chapter two, channels are means to reach a source. For example, the Internet is not a specific source, it is a means to reach sources, thus regarded as a channel in this study. Databases however, are designed to organize and hold specific sets of data and thus regarded as sources, just like a library. The difference between the Internet/websites and for example online databases like Google and the KeKi database is that the former are regarded as websites of organizations and institutions.

It should be noted that Google, Google Scholar and search engines are regarded as distinct sources in this research.

**Table 4.4.1: Sources used by children's rights professionals**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>		<i>Other professionals</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	fragments	n	fragments	n	fragments
Colleagues	3	3	4	6	7	9
People from professional network	3	4	0	0	4	4
Relevant organizations	8	12	3	3	11	15
Libraries	3	3	2	2	5	5
(academic) Databases	11	19	1	2	12	21
Google	12	13	8	12	20	25
Search engines	1	1	1	1	2	2
Google Scholar	4	7	0	0	4	7
Experts	2	7	3	7	5	14
Internal sources	3	4	4	5	7	9

As becomes clear from table 4.4.1 Google (n=20), databases (n=12) and relevant organisations (n=11) are the most consulted sources among professionals. **Google** for example is mentioned as a source that is used when an individual does not really know where to start searching for information, as indicated by interviewee 1 (CRP):

*‘En als ik niet meteen iemand ken, of niet meteen op een instantie kan komen die mij verder kan helpen dan ga ik eigenlijk heel snel naar Google.’*

‘ And if I don’t know anyone, or can’t think of an organization that can help me, I will be using Google quite often.’

Interviewees also indicate that Google is often used to get a global picture about a subject, for example interviewee 14 (CRP) stated this:

*‘Google is altijd interessant om zo je eerste globale verkenning te hebben, zo heel algemeen zo van wat zijn zo de grote lijnen als je rond dat thema wilt werken.’*

‘Google is always interesting to use to conduct a global exploration, to get a broad view on a theme.’

The influence of information seeking phase on choice of action will be elaborated further on in section 4.5. It is also notable that the practice workers and policy workers amongst the children’s rights professionals have often mentioned Google as a channel they use at the start of their search. This is because these professionals don’t always exactly know where to start looking for the information they need, as interviewee 1 indicated.

According to the interviewees **(academic) databases** (e.g. Web of Science, Google Scholar, KeKi database) are especially consulted when professionals need academic literature. These (online) databases are most often used by the researchers within the group of children’s rights professionals. This is probably due to the fact that this group often needs scientific research as described in section 4.2, and they know where to search for this information.

**Relevant organisations** are also used as a source depending on the information needed. For example interviewee 10 (CRP) indicated that she turns to other organisations to learn about their views:

*‘Wat hebben andere internationale vooraanstaande mensenrechten organisaties daar al over gezegd?’*

‘What have other leading international human rights organizations already said about it already?’

This is also the case for other professionals, as stated by interviewee 23 (OP). He said that he also searches for information at other entrepreneurs and organizations:

*‘Dus je zoekt ook informatie bij andere ondernemers, andere organisaties, hoe doen zij het? Welke ontwikkelingen zijn er?’*

‘So you're also looking for information at other entrepreneurs, other organizations, how do they do it? What developments are there?’

Other than in the use of (scientific) databases there are no differences between the use of sources of children’s rights professionals and other professionals.

In table 4.4.2 on the next page the channels used by professionals are shown.



**Table 4.4.2: Channels used by professionals**

	<i>Children's rights professionals</i>		<i>Other professionals</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	fragments	n	fragments	n	fragments
Books	6	7	7	9	13	16
Journals	5	5	0	0	5	5
Internet/websites	9	15	6	13	15	28
Intranet	2	2	2	2	4	4
Email	7	8	8	10	14	18
Personal contact	6	6	8	15	14	21
Telephone	6	7	5	8	11	15
Newsletter	6	8	0	1	6	9
Social media	2	3	2	2	4	5
Training initiatives	8	10	1	1	9	11
Magazines	1	1	0	0	1	1
Brochures	1	1	0	0	1	1

As can be seen in table 4.4.2, the professionals use a lot of different channels. The channels most often mentioned are Internet/websites (n=15), email (n=14), personal contact (n=14), books (n=13), telephone (n=11) and training initiatives (n=9). While most channels are mentioned almost as much by children's rights professionals and other professionals, it is notable that children's rights professionals often mention training initiatives while of the other professionals only one person mentioned it as a channel. The researcher regards project meetings and training days as training initiatives.

The statements about the choice of action also indicate a relationship between channel and source choice. For example interviewee 14 (CRP) said that the only written source (and in this case also a channel) she uses is TJK (children's rights journal) because it is not available online (see section 4.1.3)

Her statement implies that because she always prefers online channels, she won't consult sources that are only consultable offline, unless the source is familiar to her

(and also has online channels). This means that source choice seems to depend on channel choice. It is proposed that this also works the other way around, because when a source is only available online, someone will also use online channels to consult the source.

#### 4.5 Implementation and evaluation

The interviewees did not make specific statements about the implementation and evaluation phase. This may indicate that the implementation and evaluation phase mostly happens unconsciously. However, from some of the statements the interviewees made it can be derived that the evaluation phase consists of determining whether or not the information need is fulfilled. One interviewee stated if she needs more information she informs herself with some other people:

*‘...en als ik dan nog meer informatie nodig heb ja dan moet ik even het gesprek aangaan met een aantal mensen’* (interviewee 1, CRP).

‘...and if I need additional information I must have a conversation with some people.’

Interviewee 4 (CRP) said that when the information she has available is not sufficient she would search the Internet:

*‘Dus meestal ga ik eerst eens een keer kijken van wat hebben we hier liggen, of wat weten we al. Als dat niet volstaat is het meestal gewoon Internet.’*

‘So usually I will take a look at what we’ve got here, or what we know already. If that isn’t sufficient I usually just use the Internet.’

Interviewee 12 (CRP) said that if she were not satisfied with the search results from a search engine she would start her search again:

*‘Als ik niet tevreden ben met de lijst die Yahoo toont van zoek resultaten. Dan begin ik opnieuw te zoeken.’*

‘If I am not satisfied with the search results from Yahoo I will start searching again.’

The interviewees also indicated that sometimes they want confirmation of the information they have acquired by consulting other sources, for example a person (colleague) with more experience as stated by interviewee 20 (OP):

*‘En het is ook een beetje bevestiging dan he. Ik vind het wel handig als iemand die meer ervaring heeft of meer meegemaakt heeft dat je die even kan raadplegen.’*

‘It’s also a kind of confirmation. I find it convenient when I can consult someone with more experience.’

These statements indicate that when the information need is not fulfilled professionals continue to search for information (thus starting the information seeking process again with a ‘new’ information need) whereby they may use different sources and channels. When the information need is fulfilled the information seeking process is finished. The interviewees didn’t make any statements about the fact that their evaluation leads to a personal style of seeking, in contrast to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995).

#### **4.6 Personal style of seeking**

One of the factors from the theoretical framework that was not mentioned often is the personal style of seeking. Some interviewees indicated they are ‘Internet seekers’ or that they do not like calling. For example, interviewee 7 (CRP) said that she is an ‘Internet seeker’:

*‘Ik ben ook een enorme...maja, dat heb je bij de meeste mensen wel, ik ben een enorme internetzoeker he dus eh het idee van naar een bibliotheek te gaan dat komt niet zo snel meer bij mij op.’*

‘I’m a huge, well, most people are, I’m a huge *Internet-seeker*, so the idea of going to the library does not come quickly to mind anymore.

Interviewee 10 (CRP) stated that she is not really a caller and that first searches for information in other ways, before she eventual calls:

*'Ik ben niet zo'n beller, om uit het niets dan beginnen vragen te stellen of een thema te leren kennen. Ik merk ook dat ik makkelijker eerst dingen op zoek en dan bijvoorbeeld bel.'*

'I'm not a caller, I won't start asking questing from scratch or get to know a theme by calling someone. I notice that I find it easier to first look up some things and then make a phone call afterwards.'

Other than this, the interviewees did not make statements about a potential personal style of seeking. This might be due to the fact that for a great deal information seeking happens unconsciously. However, based on the previous quotes it can be assumed that the personal style of seeking influences the choice of action. Contrary to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995), the results of this study indicate it can be regarded as a personal factor.

#### **4.7 Other relevant results**

As became clear from the previous sections (4.1-4.3, 4.6), there are different motivations for choice of action. In section 4.2 only the kinds of information the professionals need have been addressed, but as already has been indicated in the previous sections, it also emerged from the interviews that there are other aspects of information needs that are of importance. Like interviewee 9 (CRP) stated, the **urgency** of the information need results in preferring using the telephone above using other channels:

*'Als ik haast heb zou ik wel eerder gaan bellen naar iemand, als ik die informatie heel snel wil hebben.'*

'When I'm in a hurry I would be more inclined to call someone, when I want the information as soon as possible.'

Other interviewees have also mentioned urgency as an important factor. Interviewee 29 (OP) also stated that he is inclined to use the telephone when the urgency of the information needed is high:

*‘Net moest ik bijvoorbeeld nog snel iemand bereiken. En als ik iemand snel moet bereiken is het eerste dat ik ga doen bellen, daarna de email.’*

‘Just now I had to contact someone quickly. And when I need to reach someone quickly the first thing I’ll do is call him, followed by email.’

In addition to this, the **importance of information**, or for example **confidentiality**, also seems to result in the choice for certain channels. Like interviewee 17 (OP) stated in section 4.3, he uses email instead of the telephone when the information is important and needs to be put on paper. The previous indicates that depending on the information need, different channel characteristics are important and thus different channels will be used.

While thus far only the influences of the motivations for information seeking behaviour on the choice of action have been described, they also influence the information seeking process in other ways. For example, it also resulted from the interviews that the motivations for information seeking behaviour also are of influence on the extensiveness of the information seeking process. One of the interviewees said that the available time influences how extensive her information seeking process will be. She stated that when she has little time, she would only use articles from a few authors she is familiar with, while it can be assumed from her statement that she will use more authors and conduct a more extensive information search when she has more time:

*‘Ik denk dat je je als je weinig tijd hebt meer gaat toespitsen op basiswerken en basis auteurs, en dat je dan niet de ambitie of de intentie gaat hebben om dan alles, alles, alles of toch heel veel gaat lezen over een bepaald onderwerp. Maar dat je dan meer de focus gaat leggen op een aantal basis auteurs of pioniers en dat je vanaf dan wel verder zult werken. Ik denk dat de kanalen dus wel hetzelfde blijven’* (interviewee 2, CRP).

‘I think that when you’re in a hurry you will be using base authors and works, and you won’t have the ambition to read everything about a subject. You will focus more on a few main authors and work from there. So I think the channels will remain the same.’

Also it turns out that the extensiveness of the information search influences which channels a professional uses. As interviewee 23 (OP) stated, when you use books then you are already searching more extensive by delving deeper into a subject:

*‘Boeken dan ben je al heel gericht op zoek, dan ben je wel heel diep naar iets op zoek.’*

‘With books you already search for specific information.’

According to the interviewees next to influencing the choice of action, the motivations for information seeking behaviour also turn out to influence *how* the professionals conduct searches. Amongst others, interviewee 3 (CRP) indicated that after a few months of working at the organization she used keywords that she did not think of previously:

*‘Zoals ik al zei, bepaalde trefwoorden bijvoorbeeld, waar dat je bijvoorbeeld de eerste 2 maand niet bij stilstond, die je nu wel vaak gaat gebruiken omdat je weet dat die ook wel nieuwe pistes opentrekken.’*

‘Like I said before, for example you will use certain keywords, that you haven’t thought of the first two months, because you now know they lead to new insights.’

Finally, there are a few more interesting things that emerged from the interviews. First, there appears to be a difference between professionals who directly know where to look for information, opposed to professionals who need intermediaries. Second, two interviewees indicated that situational factors, in this case time, not only influence which channels/sources someone consults but also with which device. For example interviewee 19 (OP) said that when he quickly needs a tiny bit of information he uses his iPhone:

*‘Als je iets heel snel nodig hebt dan tik, tik, tik. Dan heb je je informatie direct op je iPhone staan.’*

'When you need something really fast then tick, tick, tick. Then you have your information on your iPhone immediately.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

In this section answers will be formulated to the research questions posed in chapter one. First, the information seeking process will be described and compared and contrasted with the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995). Second, the differences between the groups of professionals will be described and finally recommendations will be proposed for the information provisioning to (children's rights) professionals.

### **4.8.1 Byström & Järvelin revisited**

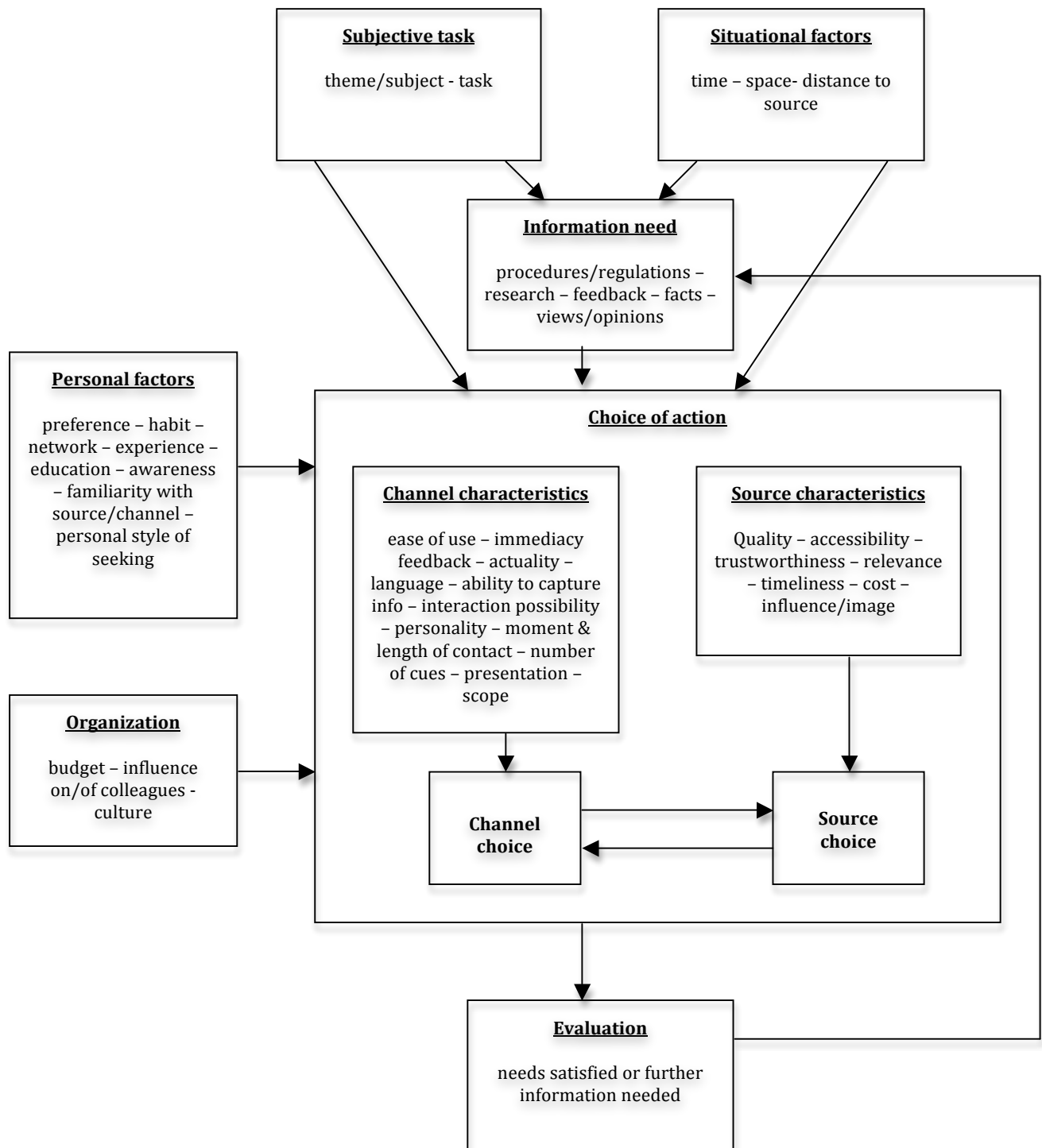
This chapter has described the findings of this study and presented them in the order of the information seeking process. The results indicated that overall the information seeking process of the professionals interviewed in this study has many similarities with the model developed by Byström & Järvelin (1995). However there are also some differences. Just like in the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) the subjective task leads to an information need and also influences the choice of action. The findings related to situational factors are also in line with the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) who also stated that situational factors both influence the information need and the choice of action. Contrary to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995), according to the interviewees personal factors only influence the choice of action and not the information need. Furthermore it can be concluded that just like in the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) the information need of the professionals leads to the choice of action. Byström & Järvelin (1995) don't mention channel and source characteristics in their model, but the results of the present study are in line with the model of Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) in which the source and channel characteristics also influence the choice of action. In the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) the influence of the organization remained unclear. The results from this study show that the organization influences the choice of action through influence on/of colleagues and providing access (or not) to certain channels and sources. Section 4.5 showed that after the choice of action there is some sort of

evaluation phase just as in the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) where professionals assess whether or not their information need has been fulfilled. When the information need has not been fulfilled and additional information is needed, a new information seeking process will start. Contrary to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) there were no indications that the evaluation phase leads to a personal style of seeking. In figure 4.8 (see next page) the descriptive model is shown which has been developed based on the findings from the previous sections. The model is proposed as an extension to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995).

There are two important notes to the model. First, the information seeking process is not as black and white as the model proposes, but is mostly an unconscious process. Second, some of the elements from the model are not mentioned as explicit as the model suggests. For example, the evaluation phase was not mentioned as an explicit element of the information seeking process by the interviewees, but it can be derived from the results that some sort of evaluation actually takes place.



Figure 4.8: Model with identified information seeking behaviour motivators



The model can be used to answer research question 1: *Which elements can be distinguished in the information seeking process of professionals?*

The model in figure 4.8 shows that the information seeking process begins with the subjective task, which leads to an information need, followed by a choice of action, which then is followed by an evaluation phase.

In sections 4.1-4.6 and in the model also the motivations for choice of action have been described to answer research question 2: *What are professionals' motives for their choice of action, in particular their choice for specific channels and sources?*

These motivations include the subjective task, situational factors, personal factors, organization, channel and source characteristics and the personal style of seeking.

As described, the information need is influenced by the subjective task and situational factors, while the choice of action is influenced by subjective task, situational factors, personal factors, organizational factors, source characteristics and channel characteristics.

#### **4.8.2 Differences between the groups of professionals**

Based on the results, there does not appear to be a difference in the information seeking process as a whole between the different groups of professionals. There are however differences between their information needs, choice of action and importance of the different motivations for information seeking behaviour.

With regard to subjective task children's rights professionals mention factors related to their job and the theme/subject they work on more often than other professionals. They mentioned 26 fragments about subjective task while the other professionals only mention subjective task 6 times. This indicates that they perceive the influence of subjective task on the information seeking process to be much higher as is the case for the other professionals, because it's not only mentioned by

more children's rights professionals, most of them also mentioned the influence of subjective task more than one time.

When looking at the information needs, the biggest difference between children's rights professionals and the other professionals is that the former indicate they need (academic) research a lot (9 out of 16) and that this is why they use (academic) databases a lot, while the latter did not indicate that they need research at all and thus also do not use (academic) databases often. The difference in information needs also results in the fact that the children's rights professionals often use journals, Internet/websites and training initiatives as channels, while the other professionals much more often use the telephone, email or personal contact.

Section 4.2 showed that there also is a difference between the information needs of the three groups of children's rights professionals. In general the children's rights professionals group of researchers need research, while the children's rights professional policy makers need procedures/regulations/policies. Practice workers seem to seek a balance between the different kinds of information. This indicates that different types of professionals have different information needs. There was one more notable difference between the three groups of children's rights professionals. Practice workers and policy workers amongst the children's rights professionals have often mentioned Google as a channel they use at the start of their search. This is because these professionals don't always exactly know where to start looking for the information they need, as interviewee 1 indicated. The researchers more often used the KeKi database (or other academic databases), because they know more specifically where to find the information they need. Other than a difference between the information needs and the use of online (academic) databases, there are no clear differences between the three groups of children's rights professionals.

There are also some differences with regard to the motivations for information seeking behaviour between the groups of professionals. With regard to the

situational factors time seems to be of more influence on the information seeking process for children's rights professionals (14 out of 16) than for the other professionals (6 out of 13). Also, the professional network seems of high importance to the children's rights professionals (7 out of 16), while only 1 of the other professionals mentioned it as one of the motivators for information seeking behaviour.

A notable difference related to personal factors between children's rights professionals and other professionals is that for the children's rights professionals the professional network is important (7 out of 16 mentioned it) while only one of the other professionals mentioned it as an influential factor.

Finally, there are a few other notable differences between both groups of professionals, related to channel characteristics. First, it is notable that the children's rights professionals often mention ease of use of the channel (12 out of 16) as an important channel characteristic, as opposed to 7 out of 13 of the other professionals. On the other hand, the other professionals most often mentioned immediacy of feedback as an important channel characteristic (7 out of 13), while only 5 out of 16 of the children's rights professionals mentioned it. Furthermore it stands out that children's rights professionals mention accessibility more often than the other professionals. With the abovementioned differences between the professionals an answer has been formulated to research question 3.

The differences in importance of the channel characteristics between the two groups of professionals as previously described can be explained by the fact that the children's rights professionals often use (academic) databases and that the ease of use influences whether or not they use specific databases. Also because time is such an important motivation for the children's rights professionals to use a particular channel/source, it is important to the children's rights professionals that the channel/source is easy to use. Especially children's right professionals from the field of practice indicated that they would use online databases if they were more familiar

with them or when they thought they would be more easy to use. The fact that the other professionals indicated that immediacy of feedback is the most important channel characteristic explains why they mainly use telephone, email and personal contact as channels.

#### **4.8.3 Recommendations for the information provisioning to professionals**

Based on the results a few recommendations can be given to improve the information provisioning to professionals, children's rights professionals in particular. Because KeKi mainly provides academic information related to children's rights, it is a given that it is an attractive information provider to a broad range of children's rights professionals.

It is no surprise that the ease of use of information channels seemed to be one of the most important motivations to use certain channel/sources for professionals. So for one, it is very important to provide user-friendly information channels. One of main instruments of KeKi to provide information to their target groups is their online database. The children's rights professionals indicated that the ease of use of such databases is of great importance to incline them to use them. Therefore it is recommended that the database will be improved, specifically the search functions. For example, interviewees indicated that they would like to be able to sort search results on publication date. Furthermore, they indicated that the presentation of the search results should be clearer. Now, the results are displayed at the bottom of the page, and you have to scroll all the way down to see them. It would be better if the search results would be displayed at the top. A higher ease of use will also help to save time, and since time proved to be such an important motivator for choice of action this is very important. If the children's rights professionals perceive that the online database is a quick way to retrieve useful information they will be more inclined to use it.

Also, the database should be made user-friendlier for professionals who are not experienced in using these kinds of databases regularly, because some of the

children's rights professionals (especially from the group of policy and practice workers) indicated that they would use the online database if it were easier to use. Also for professionals in general, it is recommended to teach them/support them how to use channels they don't use regularly. In KeKi's case, one of the training initiatives KeKi organizes can be used to give a small information skills training to people who are not used to use these kinds of databases. This is because the professionals who have not used these databases before indicated that they would use them if they knew *how* to use them. This is in line with previous research (Brunton, 2007; Craig et al., 2007), which has shown that user-education programmes significantly influence the information-seeking behaviour of individuals; so that they will be more inclined to use channels they are not familiar with. It will also help save time.

Furthermore, it is recommended that highlights in children's rights research be offered in concise formats so that professionals who do not know how to use the database or are not familiar with interpreting and using academic research, also can use the information.

Finally, since people from their professional network are a frequently consulted source by children's rights professionals, and their professional network is also an important motivator for choice of action, KeKi should try to become a facilitator for a network of children's rights professionals. This can be done online, for example through their website, or by using their training initiatives for it.

## 5. Discussion and limitations

In this chapter, the results will be discussed, limitations of this research will be addressed and recommendations for further research will be given.

### 5.1 Discussion

When comparing the findings from this study to previous research, there are a lot of similarities with previous research as well as some distinctions. Many of the existing models that include channel and source characteristics focus on channel and source choice. Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) indicate that their model 'describes the choice for a particular channel/source and not the information seeking process from start to finish'. The model developed in the present study, however, describes the information seeking process as a whole. This is indicated by the arrow from the *evaluation* box to the *information need* box. This is in line with the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995), who also describe the information process as a whole. However, existing models that describe the complete information seeking process, like Byström & Järvelin's model, do not explicitly contain channel and source characteristics as influencers of choice of action. The other similarities and differences compared to the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) have already been described in section 4.8.1. Next the specific motivations of information seeking behaviour will be compared and contrasted with previous research.

The finding that time is of high influence (20 out of 29) on the information seeking process of (children's rights) professionals supports the research of Savolainen (2006) and Prabha, Connaway, Olszewski & Jenkins (2007) that time is a significant context in information seeking. The finding from Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012) that next to available time and (physical) distance, place and point of time influence choice of action is also supported by this research.

In line with the current study a literature study by Davies (2007) showed that lack of time, issues with IT or online resources and limited search skills are the most common barriers to academic literature searching (Davies 2007). Especially the policy and practice workers amongst the children's rights professionals indicated that they don't search for academic literature (e.g. by using databases) because they don't have time for it, and because they are not used to using such databases.

In line with the results of Foster (2003), this study showed that the organization is of influence on the accessibility of certain sources. With regard to the channel and source characteristics, this study showed that accessibility, quality, ease of use and immediacy of feedback highly influence the choice of action, which is in line with research of Byström & Järvelin (1995), Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain (1996) and Van den Boer & Pieterse (2012). This study is also in line with the Social Influence Model of Fulk et al. (1990), because the professionals indicated that their co-workers influence their choice of action or the information they use. However, in this study the social context seemed not to be a separate factor but a sub factor related to the organization.

Finally, the results also support the Media Richness Theory of Daft & Lengel (1984) by showing that professionals, who indicated that immediacy of feedback is the most important channel characteristic, mainly use the telephone, email and personal contact as channels.

## **5.2 Limitations**

This research has a few limitations. First, the interview questions are derived from previous research on information seeking behaviour. This means that chances are that interviewees answers to motivations for information seeking behaviour are directed towards motivations already researched before, thus making it more difficult to examine 'new' motivations for information seeking behaviour. Furthermore, the similarities between the model developed in the current study and



the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995) might be explained by the fact that the questions are more or less asked in the order of the model of Byström & Järvelin (1995). On the other side, this study strengthens the claims of previous research by confirming the already examined motivations in a specific context. What is also notable in the results, is that the other professionals indicated their most often used channels are personal contact, telephone and email, while they also indicated that their most frequently used source is Google instead of sources which would require such channels. On the one hand, this may be explained by the fact that the interviewees regard Google as a channel instead of a source, which would make Google their most used channel. On the other hand, this may incline that the interviewees forgot to mention some important sources.

Aside from these limitations, there are also limitations related to validity and reliability.

### **5.3.1 Validity**

Shadish, Cook & Campbell (2002) define validity of a research as '*the approximate truth of an inference*'. Degree of validity can be influenced by different factors. One of these factors, which is specifically important for this study, is the sample size. Because this study is a descriptive case study involving a relative small number of interviewees, it is hard to make generalizations from the findings. This threatens the external validity of this research. External validity can be increased by comparing results with extant literature (Riege, 2003). As outlined in the discussion the findings match with findings of earlier research on information seeking behaviour of professionals. This makes it plausible that the findings of this study can also be generalized. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to include a quantitative follow-up study in this study and given the time available for this study, the number of interviewees was maximized.

### **5.3.2 Reliability**

Reliability means that 'subsequent researchers are able to arrive at the same insights if they conduct the study along the same steps again' (Gibbert, Ruigrok & Wicki, 2008, p. 1468). They propose that a case study should focus on being transparent and replicable in order to increase reliability by documentation and clarification of all research procedures. In this study, reliability is likely warranted, because of the careful documentation and clarification of all research procedures. This way, it is tried to make the research as transparent and replicable as possible. Another threat to reliability in this study might be the reliability of the codebook developed by the researcher. By discussing the codebook with another researcher it is tried to ensure reliability. The results from the reliability test of the codebook indicate that the reliability of the codebook is good.

### **5.4 Future research directions**

It is important that in future research, a bigger sample will be used to be able to really get an insight into the differences between professionals from different fields of work, as this present study only gave a global view. Also, in future research it is important to study the information retrieval skills of professionals, in particular with regard to searching on online databases. This is because a lot of professionals indicated that they would use (academic) databases if they only knew how to use them and how to use and interpret the information available in them. Finally it is important that the developed conceptual model will be tested through empirical research to demonstrate its value, and to provide further endorsement of the value of the models it is based on.

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## 7. Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview questions

#### [Opening]

1. What is your age?
2. What is your academic background?
3. What is your professional status?

#### [Channel- and source choice – General]

4. What kind of information do you need in your job in general?
5. Can you describe how you look for information in general?
6. Think about the process of a recent project you worked on. First describe the stages of the project, then explain what information sources you used in which stage and why, and finally explain what channel you used for each source and why.

#### [Channel – and source choice – Task characteristics]

7. How would you characterize the information that you needed? (for example, simple or complex?)
8. How does the kind of information needed influence what sources and channels you chose to use?
9. Do you often use the same channels, irrespective of the kind of information you need?

#### [Channel – and source choice - Situational factors]

10. How would the environment in which you are when you search for information influence which channels you chose? (For example, you may be more inclined to use your computer to search on the Internet when you are behind your desk)

11. Imagine a situation in which there is time pressure to find information. Does this affect your choice for a channel, and if so, how? (Are there any other situational factors?)

**[Channel – and source choice – Personal style of seeking and personal factors]**

12. How does your personal preference for certain channels affect your information seeking during your work? For example, when your personal preference is calling, does this mean that you also often use the phone when you need information?

13. When looking back on different projects that you worked on, do you often use the same channels and sources or also different channels and sources?

14. What characteristics influence that you use different channels and sources?

15. To what extent do the experiences that you have influence the channel you choose? Do your experiences with certain channels/sources also influence your information seeking behaviour in the future?

**[Channel – and source choice – Organization]**

16. Do you also look at how others search for information in your organization?

17. Are there certain habits in your organization if you look at how information is sought?

18. How does the organization you work for influence the channels you use to find information?

**[Specifically about KeKi information products]**

19. What information channels and sources offered by KeKi do you use?

20. How do you use these products (for example the database and the journal 'Tijdschrift voor Jeugd en Kinderrechten')?

21. Do you have tips or suggestions on how KeKi can better meet your information needs?



**[Closing]**

22. Is there anything that we have overlooked and what is of importance for how you look for information?

**Appendix B: Interview invitation.**

Beste mevrouw/meneer,

Mijn naam is Arie Zoontjes en ik ben student Communicatiewetenschappen aan de Universiteit Twente (Nederland). Graag wil ik u uitnodigen om deel te nemen aan een interview over uw informatie zoekgedrag. Ik werk samen met KeKi aan een onderzoek naar het informatie zoekgedrag van hun doelgroepen, met als doel KeKi te helpen met het verbeteren van de dienstverlening aan u als kinderrechten professional. Door middel van het interview wil ik een inzicht verkrijgen in de manier waarop u uw informatie zoekt en vindt.

Ik heb u gecontacteerd omdat u regelmatig aan projecten/onderzoeken werkt waarbij u op de een of andere manier informatie met betrekking tot kinderrechten nodig heeft. Ik ben met mijn onderzoek geïnteresseerd in welke bronnen en kanalen u gebruikt en in de motieven waarom u juist deze gebruikt. Dit kan KeKi helpen om beter te voldoen aan de informatiebehoeften van zijn doelgroepen, en aan de informatiebehoeften van professionals in het algemeen.

Het interview zal maximaal een uur van uw tijd in beslag nemen en ik zal mij naar u(w) (werkplek) verplaatsen. Ik zou het interview graag houden ergens in februari. Mocht u om de een of andere reden niet kunnen/willen deelnemen, zou u deze mail dan willen voorleggen aan een collega?

Graag zie ik uw reactie tegemoet.

Met vriendelijke groet,  
Arie Zoontjes, stagiair KeKi  
[a.h.g.zoontjes@student.utwente.nl](mailto:a.h.g.zoontjes@student.utwente.nl)

## **Appendix C: Interview introduction & informed consent.**

### Introductie

Bedankt voor de tijd die u wilt vrijmaken voor het deelnemen aan dit interview over uw informatie zoekgedrag. Mijn naam is Arie Zoontjes en ik ben een master student Communicatiewetenschappen aan de Universiteit Twente. Ik ben door KeKi ingeschakeld om een onderzoek uit te voeren naar het informatie zoekgedrag van hun doelgroepen met als doel KeKi te helpen met het verbeteren van de dienstverlening aan u als kinderrechten professional. De titel van het onderzoek is 'Information seeking Behaviour of Professionals: a Qualitative Study'. Dit onderzoek voer ik uit in het kader van mijn afstuderen. Ik heb u benaderd omdat u als het goed is regelmatig aan projecten werkt waarbij u op de een of andere manier informatie met betrekking tot kinderrechten/voor uw persoonlijke ontwikkeling nodig heeft. Ik wil graag weten hoe u in zo'n geval te werk gaat, zodat KeKi haar diensten beter op haar doelgroepen kan aansluiten/indicaties kunnen worden gegeven voor het verbeteren van de informatievoorziening aan professionals.

### Onderwerp

KeKi wil graag weten op welke manier haar doelgroepen, kinderrechten professionals uit zowel het beleid, praktijk – als onderzoeksveld, op zoek gaan naar informatie en wat hen motiveert om op deze manier te werk te gaan. Een van de manieren om de informatie te vinden is door KeKi te benaderen. Er zijn verschillende manieren waarop KeKi/andere organisaties benaderd kan/kunnen worden en deze manieren worden in dit onderzoek kanalen genoemd. Kanalen zijn in dit geval dus bijvoorbeeld de website, de databank, email of telefoon. KeKi/de organisatie zelf is de bron. Ik ben met mijn onderzoek geïnteresseerd in welke bronnen en kanalen u gebruikt en ook de motieven waarom u juist deze gebruikt. Dit kan ons helpen om met KeKi beter te voldoen aan de informatiebehoeften van haar doelgroepen/om indicaties te geven voor het verbeteren van de informatievoorziening aan professionals.

### Opmerkingen

In het onderzoek zullen vragen worden gesteld over uw informatie zoekgedrag. Bij de antwoorden op uw vragen zijn er geen goede of foute antwoorden mogelijk, al uw ervaringen, gedachten, meningen en opmerkingen zullen worden meegenomen in de resultaten. Het interview zal maximaal een uur in beslag nemen. Om de analyse van de resultaten zo goed mogelijk te kunnen uitvoeren en om niets van uw antwoorden verloren te laten gaan zal het interview worden opgenomen. Bovendien zullen alle antwoorden die u geeft volledig anoniem worden verwerkt. Ik hoop dat u hier geen bezwaar tegen heeft. Mocht u toch besluiten niet meer te willen deelnemen dan kan het interview op elk moment beëindigd worden en zullen

uw antwoorden niet worden meegenomen in de resultaten. Als u nog vragen heeft voor het interview zal worden afgenomen kunt u deze nog stellen.

Graag zou ik u willen vragen het onderstaande door te nemen en te ondertekenen:

*'Ik verklaar hierbij op voor mij duidelijke wijze te zijn ingelicht over de aard en methode van het onderzoek, zoals uiteengezet in de introductie van het interview. Mijn vragen zijn naar tevredenheid beantwoord en ik stem geheel vrijwillig in met deelname aan dit onderzoek. Ik behoud daarbij het recht deze instemming weer in te trekken zonder dat ik daarvoor een reden hoeft te geven en besef dat ik op elk moment mag stoppen met het experiment. Indien mijn onderzoeksresultaten gebruikt zullen worden in wetenschappelijke publicaties, dan wel op een andere manier openbaar worden gemaakt, zal dit volledig geanonimiseerd gebeuren. Mijn persoonsgegevens zullen niet door derden worden ingezien zonder mijn uitdrukkelijke toestemming. Als ik nog verdere informatie over het onderzoek zou willen krijgen, nu of in de toekomst, kan ik me wenden tot Arie Zoontjes ([a.h.g.zoontjes@student.utwente.nl](mailto:a.h.g.zoontjes@student.utwente.nl)). Voor eventuele klachten over dit onderzoek kunt u zich wenden tot de secretaris van de Commissie Ethiek van de faculteit Gedragswetenschappen van de Universiteit Twente, mevr. J. Rademaker (telefoon: 053-4894591; e-mail: [j.rademaker@utwente.nl](mailto:j.rademaker@utwente.nl), Postbus 217, 7500 AE Enschede). Aldus in tweevoud getekend:*

*Naam geïnterviewde    Handtekening*

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*Naam onderzoeker    Handtekening*

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Datum:

## Appendix D: Coding scheme

Category	Description
<b>Information needs</b>	<b>All statements about the perceived information needs and its influence on the ISP</b>
Procedures/regulations/policies	The respondent indicates that the information he/she needs are procedures/regulations
Views/opinions	The person indicates that the information he/she needs are views/opinions
(Children's rights) research	Statements about the information need for scientific research
Facts & figures/numbers	The respondent indicates that the information he/she needs are facts & figures/numbers
Feedback	The respondent indicates that the information he/she needs is a form of feedback
Complexity	Statements about the difficulty/complexity of the information needed and the specificity of the information needed
Sensitivity	Statements about the sensitivity and confidentiality
Frequency	Statements about how often the information is required
Urgency	Statements about the urgency with which the information is needed
<b>Situational factors</b>	<b>Statements about the influence of situational factors on the ISP</b>
Time	Statements about the influence of time on the ISP
Space	Statements showing that the physical place where someone is influences the ISP
Distance to a source	Statements indicating that the physical distance to a source is of influence on which channel one uses to consult the source
<b>Subjective task</b>	<b>All statements about the influence of the job/task at hand on the ISP</b>
Job	Statements indicating that a person's job influences the ISP
Theme/subject	Statements indicating that the theme/subject a person is working on influences the ISP
<b>Channel characteristics</b>	<b>Statements about the influence of channel characteristics on the ISP</b>
Ability to capture information	Statements that indicate that someone uses a particular channel because information can be captured (in black and white)
Immediacy feedback	The person indicates that the rate at which you can expect an answer influences the choice for a particular channel
Interaction possibility	The person make statements about the importance of the possibility to interact when choosing a particular channel
Degree of personality	Statements that indicate that a person chooses a channel because it is more personal
Moment and length of contact	Statements that indicate that a person chooses a particular channel because it offers the possibility to search information/reply at a self chosen time at their own pace
Number of cues	Statements about the number of cues/signals you can receive from the other party using a particular channel: showing things/give explanations

Actuality	Statements that indicate that a person chooses a channel because of the expected actuality of the information/whether or not up to date
Language	Statements that indicate that a person chooses a channel because of its easy or difficult language use
Ease of use of the channel	Statements that indicate that a person chooses a channel because it is easy to use
Presentation	Statements that indicate that a person chooses a channel because of its presentation (and orderliness)
Scope	Statements that indicate that a person chooses a channel depending on the extensiveness the information, e.g. national vs. international.
<b>Source characteristics</b>	<b>Statements about the influence of source characteristics on the ISP</b>
Trustworthiness	All statements about the reliability or helpfulness of the source. For example expertise and authority can increase trustworthiness.
Packaging	All statements about the ease of finding the right information at the source
Timeliness	Statements that indicate that the information can be found when needed at a source
Cost	The person indicates that costs influence the choice for looking for another channel
Quality	Statements about the influence of expected level of detail/accuracy of the information provided by the source for choosing a source
Accessibility of the source	Statements about the relative ease of access of the source/quick to contact
Relevance	Statements about the expected relevance of a source
Expectation/image	Statements about the influence of expectations of a source on choice of action, for example expectations about a shared vision, what kind of information can be found at a source, image of the source
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Statements about the influence of the organization on the ISP</b>
Budget	Statements that organizational budget influences the ISP
Influence of/on colleagues	Statements that indicate that colleagues are of influence in their ISP
Culture	All statements about the influence of organizational culture on the ISP
<b>Personal factors</b>	<b>Statements about the influence of personal factors on the ISP</b>
Network	Statements that indicate that a persons professional network plays a role in the ISP
Experience/knowledge base	Statements that indicate that the amount of knowledge a person already has is of influence which channels he/she chooses to use
Education	Statements that indicate that level of education is of influence on which channels and sources one chooses to use
Age	Statements that indicate that age is of influence on which channels one uses
Years experience on the job	Statements about the influence of the years experience

Awareness/perception on relevance of certain information	someone has on the ISP Statements about the expected relevance of information
Habit	Statements that indicate that indicate that a person often uses the same channels and sources, it is a habit
Preference	All statements that indicate that a person has a preference for a particular source or channel
Familiarity with a channel	All statements that indicate that a person uses a certain channel because of his/her familiarity with it
Familiarity with a sources	All statements that indicate that a person uses a certain source because of his/her familiarity with it
<b>Personal style of seeking</b>	<b>Statements about the influence of the personal style of seeking on the ISP</b>
Positive experience	All statements showing that a person chose a source/channel because of previous positive experiences with the channel/source:
Negative experience	All statements showing that a person chose another source/channel because of previous negative experiences with the channel/source:
<b>Phase information seeking process</b>	<b>All statements about a certain phase in the information seeking process and its influence on the choice of action</b>
Preparation/exploration	Statements about which channels and sources a person uses during the exploration of a subject/finding basic information/first phase in the seeking process
Delve deeper into subject	Statements about which channels a person uses for a deep exploration of a topic
Reflection	Statements about which channels and sources a person uses to reflect on the information he/she found and to get confirmation/certainty
Information sharing	Statements about which channels and sources a person uses to exchange information
<b>Channels/sources used</b>	<b>Channels/sources used are also coded</b>